

# THE BARREL MYSTERY

WILLIAM J. FLYNN



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**THE BARREL MYSTERY**



# THE BARREL MYSTERY

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## **THE BARREL MYSTERY**





## CHAPTER I

### THE BARREL MURDER

WHERE the East River swims around the foot of Eleventh Street is an old abandoned wooden dock that looks more like the broken skeleton of a buried wreck than the thing it used to be. A covey of barges are huddled against the wharf opposite, and this wharf gradually becomes solid pavement where the lumber yard begins. It fronts the street with the most dilapidated board fence in Christendom made up of broken odds and ends covered with a crazy patchwork of corrugated iron scrap stained and rusted by the weather. If an old-time pirate—one of those romantic devils with scarred and battered features and a black patch over one eye—should suddenly peer at you through one of the many cracks in the splintered stockade you could not be very surprised; in fact, you would almost expect it to happen.

Farther up is a livery stable, a mere hole in a pile of bricks, once red now slavered over with

white-wash once white. Outside is a man clipping the mane of a truck horse with its harness dragging in the filth. On the corner is a saloon, such as you find on the East Side, shouldering against the dry dock storage for live poultry with chorus of cackling inmates. On the corner opposite is a huge, green cheese of a building occupied by various small manufacturers. The third corner bulges with the huge cisterns of the gas works soiled and smeared with soot and fumes. The fourth corner has become historic. Every secret service man in the city knows what is on the Northwest corner of East Eleventh Street and Avenue D. They know the old, battered red brick walls that belong to the New York Mallet Works, walls that look as if they have been scarred by a fusilade of machine guns, walls with rusted chicken-wire netting before windows that are never cleaned except when the rain is drumming against them, walls that are broken by a huge portal closed by a worm-eaten, wooden gate quite in keeping with the whole thing. There is a ramshackle tenement next door with rooms for rent and shutters all drawn—shutters that were doubtless a shrill green once upon a time but now camou-

flaged by the blasts of blistering sun and cutting rains into a crazy-quilt of strange hues, shutters maimed and broken and dangling and just hanging together. The only open aperture in the weird and forbidden dwelling is the entrance, breathing filth and the sour odor of poverty. Crowding close to the tenement is an almost cavernous fodder and feed store, its broken, soiled windows half-hidden behind shattered boards and laths from which remnants of bill-posters, stained and ragged, flutter now and then. A heap of rubbish, garlanded with a jumble of rusty wire and battered tin cans, adorns the broken curb. A pair of cast-off baby shoes with buttons dangling are sailing on a pool of dirty water.

Desolate as the spot is it appeared even more so on the morning of April fourteenth, 1903, in the haze and the drizzling rain of an early hour. But Mrs. Frances Conners, an Irish woman, did not notice these things as she crossed the spot on her way to the bakeshop to get rolls for breakfast. She was used to the place. Wrapped up in the red sweater affected by East Side women and bending her head under her umbrella, she paid no attention to the very

things that would have made a stranger pause and gaze. As she slipped across the corner, however, she noticed a barrel standing on the curb in front of the mallet works. That barrel was not there the day before. It was quite a big barrel, the kind they use for shipping sugar. Her feminine curiosity was aroused and she retraced her steps. In this instance curiosity revealed a deed that horrified the entire country, frightened the citizens of New York, and threw the Detective Bureau at Police Headquarters into a panic. The revelation also brought home to many people the disquieting realization that there were assassins in our midst that defied the efforts of our police to cope with them.

An overcoat was thrown over the top of the barrel. It was fairly damp but not quite wet, indicating that it could not have been there very long. Mrs. Connors raised the coat. Quickly she let it drop and screamed. There was a man's body crushed into the barrel. The body was in a doubled-up position, both feet and one hand sticking over the rim of the barrel.

Summoned by Mrs. Connors' screams the neighborhood was on its feet in an instant. A panicky crowd gathered on the fateful corner

listening with gaping mouths and blanched faces to the frightened chatter of the Irish woman. Morbid curiosity prompted a few to raise the coat and take a look. Every time this was done some of the women would scream hysterically.

A policeman came running up. The body in the barrel was still warm when the officer examined it after rolling the barrel over and dragging the victim out. About the dead man's neck was wound a strip of gunny-sack. When removed it revealed more than a dozen wounds any one of which would have resulted in death. An ambulance surgeon came at a gallop. He declared that the man could not have been dead more than two hours at the most.

The corpse was taken to the Union Market Police Station. The examination made there led to the conclusion that the victim was a man about the age of forty. His complexion was swarthy and his ears were pierced with rings. The clothing about the dead man's body was of good quality, and there was nothing about the physical make-up to indicate that he belonged to the laboring class. The forehead was of the high, receding type, and it was partly covered with thin, curly hair of a light-brown tinge.



The moustache was turning grey. On the left cheek were two scars an inch or more in length forming the letter "V" inverted. It was an old scar.

A closer inspection of the body revealed that at least two weapons must have been used by the assassin or assassins. A narrow, two-edged blade had evidently been used for inflicting the wound just below the left ear. This stab was made by a powerful hand for it was at least three inches deep. A wound above the Adam's apple penetrated sheer to the spinal cord, and was doubtless done by the same weapon. Numerous other and smaller wounds were of a like character. A slash extending from ear to ear across the throat was probably done with a long, sharp blade.

In searching the clothing of the dead man a little brass bound crucifix was found. It was of foreign make with a Latin motto on the scroll work above the figure of the Saviour, and a skull-and-cross-bones at the base of the crucifix. This was found in a waistcoat, in which we also located a silver watch-chain similar in make to those common to the peasantry of Southern Italy. The crucifix was one that is not common

to any locality. There was an overcoat on the body, and in one of the pockets two handkerchiefs were found, one of which was small in size and faintly perfumed. The only identification mark on the clothing was on the shoes, which were marked "Burt & Co., opposite Produce Exchange." The shoes were worn, and there was a small patch on one of them. The gunny sack about the throat was marked by the blood stains only. Stencilled on the barrel were the initials "W & T" on the bottom; on the sides "G 233." It was a regulation sugar barrel, and the bottom was covered with about three inches of sawdust soaked with blood. Onion peels and some stubs of cigars of the stogie make were scattered in the sawdust, the kind of cigars that are sold in Italian stores and bar-rooms. A charred note in the handwriting of a woman was found in the barrel. Two written lines were in part legible: "Giorne che venite—subito l'urgenza." Translated the words might read: "Day that you come—suddenly the urgency."

Every device of detection known to the New York Detective Bureau was brought into service. Inspector George W. McCloskey, head of the bureau in person, aided by picked men,

scoured every nook and corner of New York in an effort to learn, first of all, the identity of the victim. The whole uniformed force was also instructed to follow any little lead of information which might indicate a connection with the murder. No identification, however, developed.

I read of the murder in the afternoon newspapers. This was on April fourteenth. I recalled certain unusual activities among the band of "Black Handers" on the night of April 12, which was about thirty-odd hours before the murder must have been committed. It came to my mind that I had seen a face new among the members of the gang. I went to the morgue and looked at the dead man. I identified him as the stranger who recently appeared at the haunts of the Black Handers. (When I say Black Handers, I mean also counterfeiters.) Two other secret service men also identified him. The body was taken out of the ice and measured according to the Bertillon method.

For some time prior to the murder I had been closely in touch with Morello, with Lupo and others of their band. I had them under surveillance for the purpose of arresting them on a charge of counterfeiting.



On the night of April 12, having accumulated considerable information concerning this band, I personally picked up the trail and followed several members of the band from their counterfeiting headquarters in the café at Elizabeth and Prince Streets. Just around the corner from this café was the saloon of Ignazio Lupo, another rendezvous of the gang. In the rear of Lupo's saloon Giuseppe Morello conducted an Italian restaurant.

Trailing along, I followed several of the gang to the butcher store of Vito La Duca, at No. 16 Stanton Street, which is just east of the Bowery. Among those present in the store was Morello, whom I had arrested four months previously for counterfeiting. He was the only one of the gang which I had arrested who had escaped conviction. Two others of the men present were Antonio Geneva and Domenico Pecoraro, both of whom I knew well. And while the three whom I have already named were in animated conversation near the rear of the shop, a fourth man, a face new to me, stood apart from the others near the door. He was the same man found less than forty hours later in the barrel.

While the conversation took place in the rear

of the shop I saw a piece of bagging being hung up as a curtain over the glass in the door leading from the street into the store. It was but a few minutes later that I saw a covered wagon driving up to the door. Two men hopped down from the seat and entered the shop. One of them came out again after a couple of minutes and drove away. Shortly after eight o'clock that evening the visitors left La Duca's store. They split up into two groups, the stranger going toward the Bowery with Morello and Pecoraro.

I communicated with Inspector McCloskey, then in charge of the Detective Bureau at Police Headquarters, and told him what I have just related. Immediately there was a rounding up of the gang, my men pairing off with the headquarters detectives and locating eleven of the members of the Black-Hand Society. Here is the list of those arrested as suspects for the murder:

Giuseppe Morello, of No. 178 Chrystie Street.

Ignazio Lupo, of No. 433 West Fortieth Street.

Messina Genova, of No. 538 East Fifteenth Street.

Vito La Duca, of No. 16 Stanton Street.

Pietro Inzarillo, of No. 226 Elizabeth Street.

Domenico Pecoraro, of No. 198 Chrystie Street.

Lorenzo Lobido, of No. 308 Mott Street.

Giuseppe Fanara, of No. 25 Rivington Street.

Giuseppe La Lamia, of No. 47 Delancey Street.

Nicola Testa, of No. 16 Stanton Street.

Luciano Perrino, of No. 47 Delancey Street.

Perrino was also known as Tomasso Petto. He was known among the members of the Black Hand aggregation as "Il Bove," meaning "The Ox."

Here was certainly a murderous aggregation of the most pronounced criminal type. They were all of them from Sicily. Most of them were armed with a revolver, some also had knives and even stilettos. On Morello the police found a .45 caliber revolver. A knife was tucked away in the waistband of his trousers, a cork being fixed at the point of the blade so that

it would not scratch his leg. Petto, the Ox, whom Inspector McCafferty of the detective bureau, and I arrested later, carried his pistol in a holster and a sheath for his stiletto. Most of the suspects had permits from the New York Police Department to carry revolvers. It was this incident, practically, which brought on the crusade against, and the passing of the law forbidding, the carrying of dangerous weapons.

The prisoners were presently hurried to the Morgue, where each of them had a look at the dead man. They were asked individually whether they knew him. The answer was the usual one—a shrug of the shoulders and the words “No understand,” “don’t know.” Morello and Pecoraro were both asked whether they knew the dead man, but denied that they had ever seen him; this in face of my seeing the two in the company of the man now dead less than forty hours before he was murdered. The dead man still remained without a name, and without a friend or relative coming to claim kinship.

Information began to percolate into my office which induced me to take a trip to Sing Sing prison in an effort to bring about the identification of the dead man. It was plain to me al-

ready then that the police force was failing in its efforts. I resolved to take a personal interest in the murder and to clear it up if possible.

At this point, let me inform the reader that an anonymous letter was addressed to Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino of the Italian Detective Squad, then a part of the New York Police Department. This letter proved to be of value in elucidating particulars aiding us in identifying the man found murdered in the barrel. The Lieutenant showed this letter to me. Knowing that Petrosino was the best man in the Police Department to handle the situation, I asked him to go to Sing Sing Prison to investigate.

Petrosino took along a photograph of the murdered man. Several of the convicts failed to identify the photograph, but the third man questioned by Petrosino, Giuseppe DePriema, looked at the photograph and said: "That is Maruena Benedetto, my brother-in-law. What has happened?"

DePriema completed the identification by corroborating the watch chain and the crucifix. He also described accurately the scar on Benedetto's face. At first, DePriema was terror-stricken. Later on, however, he grew angry, as only the



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Sicilian bent on murder can get angry. He gave us the Buffalo address of Benedetto, and told us all about the dead man's business as a stone cutter. DePriema said that his brother-in-law had been out of work for some months past, that he had left Buffalo to associate himself with a band of counterfeiters in New York.

It is my personal opinion that if the New York police had not blundered after arresting the gang named the murderer would have been located in short order. The police made the mistake of locking up the gang together, so that they could speak and plan together. Each man should have been incarcerated separately. The detectives also failed to examine all the letters and all the papers taken from the prisoners when searched.

Returning to New York from Sing Sing, Petrosino came directly to me. Together we went to Police Headquarters and asked to be shown the letters and papers taken from the suspects. Among the litter I found a pawn-ticket for a watch which had been pledged at a Bowery pawnshop for one dollar on the day of the murder. The ticket was found on Petto, the Ox. It was positively identified by the wife of Bene-

detto, who was brought on from Buffalo. Certain markings and engravings were described by Mrs. Benedetto, which could have been known only to one closely acquainted with the time-piece.

With this evidence to proceed upon, Petto, the Ox, was indicted by the Grand Jury, after being held without bail on the murder charge. Meanwhile, the other suspects were turned out by Police Magistrate Barlow because there was not sufficient evidence to hold them on the murder charge. Murder in the first degree was the charge against Petto.

From then on evidence began to accumulate that convinced me personally of the existence of an organized "Black Hand" society in New York City. Eminent counsel was engaged and a large fund raised by the criminal associates of Petto, the Ox, to fight for his freedom. During the time that Petto was incarcerated, information came to me that each and every one of the gang was from the same town in Sicily; a place named Corleone, about twenty-seven miles from Palermo. It was in Palermo that Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino, of the New York Police Force, was murdered eventually while in quest of spe-

cial information for Police Commissioner Theodore Bingham. We also ferreted out the significant fact that in order to gain the inner circle of the secret society, which was furnishing funds for the defense of Petto, the applicant would have to be from the town of Corleone.

When Petto had been held in the Tombs Prison for more than four months his attorney asked that he be released on his own recognizance, the attorney stating that there was not sufficient evidence upon which to bring the accused to trial with any fair hope of convicting him. No sooner was Petto released than he disappeared from his accustomed haunts with the gang in New York.

But Petto did not escape the eye of the Secret Service. He was traced to Pittston, Pa. Nor did Petto escape a blood relative of the murdered man. Probably I had better explain at this point that there is an unwritten law among the Italians of southern Sicily that when a member of a family is murdered, the crime must be avenged by a blood relative of the murdered person. If no blood relative is available, a kinsman by marriage assumes the task.

Petto soon became the leader of a band of



black-handers who preyed upon the Italian miners in Pittston. Then one night, when the streets were slippery with a cold, drizzling rain, there came an ominous knock at his door. Petto sensed that something was wrong. He made ready for any emergency and drew his big revolver. But the unknown visitor was quicker than the murderer of Benedetto, and the aim was certain. Five bullets stopped the Black Hander forever. A dagger was sunk into the heart of Petto, the Ox, to make doubly sure that he was not playing 'possum. Beside the warm body of Petto his revolver was found fully loaded. The hand holding the revolver was partly shot away. On his body was discovered a little brass-bound crucifix with a skull-and-cross-bones at the Saviour's feet, an exact duplicate of that taken from the body of the man found in the barrel. As far as the police records show, the avenger of Benedetto has never been apprehended. Whether the avenger has since suffered a fate similar to his victim I cannot at this moment say.

## CHAPTER II

### WHAT WAS THE MOTIVE FOR THE MURDER?

How do I know that Petto, the Ox, murdered Benedetto? you would ask.

And what could be the motive for his crime? Follow me a little further.

In January, 1903, several months before Benedetto's body was found in the barrel, three Italians were arrested in the City of Yonkers. They were Isodoro Crocervera, Salvatore Romano and Giuseppe DePriema. The latter is the brother-in-law of the barrel-murder victim. The three men were apprehended by the local police in Yonkers on the charge of passing counterfeit five-dollar notes of the National Iron Bank of Morristown, New Jersey. The secret service men were well aware that these notes were being imported from Italy by the Morello gang.

When I was called into the case, the Yonkers police, who made the arrest, told me that the three men were accompanied by another Italian,

a short fellow, who got away. Knowing the ways of the gang, it was plain to me that the escaped Italian was the treasurer of the crew passing the counterfeit money. Such a treasurer is always hiding in the distance with the greater bulk of the counterfeit bills for the purpose of making a get-away if the passers get into trouble and are arrested. The treasurer is supposed to rush away to the secret meeting place of the Black-Hand Society, where a counsel is held to decide just what plan to follow in the effort to get the members who have been arrested out of their peril.

From the description given me of the Italian who made his get-away I recognized him as a counterfeiter already registered in the files of the Secret Service as Number Six. I was also able to identify Crocervera and DePriema as members of the Corleone gang.

My next move was to bring the Yonkers officers to New York and place them where they could have a good look at Number Six. The officers identified the man without hesitation. Number Six was arrested, therefore, on February 19, and gave the name of Giuseppe Giallambardo. He got six years.

The Black Handers were puzzled. They could not understand how it happened that Giallambardo had come into the toils unless one of the three men arrested had "squealed." And perhaps I should say right here that the gang never realized they were ever under surveillance, and that every move made by them individually was noted in the daily reports of Secret Service sent to Washington.

When Crocervera and DePriema were brought to my office I knew in advance that neither of them would talk, having had the characteristics of the men recorded long before they were arrested. However, in order to give Crocervera the impression that DePriema had told me a lot of the workings of the gang, I hit upon the idea of keeping DePriema in my inner office for several hours while Crocervera remained in an outer office. I was timing my effort for a purpose. As DePriema was leaving, I stepped to the door with him and shook his hand warmly and patted him on the back in order that Crocervera, seeing the performance, might gain the impression that DePriema had confessed all he knew about the gang. Naturally, the object of this move was to tempt Crocervera to talk and give information

important to the government. But Crocervera did not talk. The subsequent arrest of Giallambardo served to strengthen the impression already planted in the mind of Crocervera that DePriema had betrayed him, and we overheard Crocervera telling this to the members of the gang while they were in our office.

The gang was not in position to take revenge on DePriema, as he was in Sing Sing prison, where the three men had been sent upon conviction on the charge of passing counterfeit money. Following the hereditary Sicilian custom, the gang then proceeded to select a blood relative of DePriema and mark him for murder. There being no male blood relative of DePriema on this side of the Atlantic, the Black Hand Society decided that the nearest male relative must pay the penalty for DePriema's treason. Benedetto, the brother-in-law, was chosen as the sacrifice.

These details of the motive of the murder, and the society's choosing Petto, the Ox, to do the killing were confessed to me several years later by members of the gang after I succeeded in convicting them for counterfeiting and had them sentenced to long terms in the Federal Penitentiary at Atlanta, Georgia.

As to the identity of Benedetto's kinsman, who made certain of his aim at Petto, the Ox, near the Italian rendezvous where "Il Bove" held sway in the little Pennsylvania city, I can only answer at the present writing that the kinsman was not DePriema, because the latter was still in Sing Sing Prison when the murder of the man in the barrel was avenged.



## CHAPTER III

### ORGANIZED TERRORISM

FROM what has been related so far, I presume the reader may gain some idea of the dangerous type of men whom I refer to as members of the Black-Hand Society.

You are now familiar with the kind of punishment meted out to one whom the gang suspects of having betrayed a member. You have also been acquainted with the Sicilian custom of revenge by way of an actual example showing how the slayer of the man in the barrel came to his end in a manner that is as certain as daylight follows darkness. It is the racial idea of the antique Hebrew law, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." The Sicilian "vendetta" demands a life for a life. You may have noted further that the police of New York and the machinery of the law failed to track down the slayer of the man in the barrel. A circumstance

that makes it singularly difficult for the authorities to cope with this type of criminals is that the Sicilian does not ask the police for help when a member of his family is murdered. He keeps it quiet. And as quietly a blood relative of the slain person assumes the responsibility which we Americans place on the police and the courts. The end of Petto, the Ox, shows exactly what happens when individual vengeance succeeds in place of justice meted out by a court of law.

The reader will remember that when the criminal band, which the police rounded up in connection with the barrel murder, were turned out by the police magistrate, because there was insufficient evidence to hold them for the murder of Benedetto, the suspects dropped out of sight as far as the police of New York were concerned.

The Secret Service kept its eagle eye on them, however. Every suspect was carefully "shadowed" by a special operative. We expected that they would gravitate back to their haunts, and they did. We spotted them in such places as the café of Pietro Inzarillo, at No. 226 Elizabeth Street, and in the dark, little Italian grocery shop of Ignazio Lupo, at No. 8 Prince Street, which is just around the corner from Inzarillo's



place. We also located suspects loafing around the dingy, garlic-smelling restaurant of Giuseppe Morello, tucked away in the rear of Lupo's grocery shop, like an evil thing afraid of the light of day.

Criminals wanted by Uncle Sam are not suffered to drop from the sight of the Secret Service. Members of this gang were busy in the counterfeit money line. The government was necessarily interested in following their movements. Consequently I stayed right on the job with my men at trailing and spotting the suspects. After a while I had in my possession quite a neat bundle of facts that gradually disclosed to us the impulse and the motives behind this crime-hardened gang of men. I say without the slightest hesitation that the basic, underlying motive of these men is a fierce and uncompromising *passion to get rich quick*. That is what makes them murderous criminals. It is the same get-rich-quick impulse that we find among unscrupulous business men and gamblers, but it is of a much more dangerous caliber and pregnant with every sinister motive to the most horrible and debased forms of crime. It is true that the "Black-Handers" got a pretty good

start in this country before the authorities were alive to the danger, but it is also true that the Secret Service did finally succeed in rounding up the leaders and their henchmen, reducing the nefarious operations to a minimum. Had this not been done just about the time it was actually done, the "Black Hand" Society would have increased its stranglehold upon the population to a point where the police might not have been able to guarantee the personal safety of the citizens. Even at the present time, when the authorities may be said to have the situation well in hand, the danger of renewed "Black Hand" activities by other groups would not be removed if the Secret Service were to relax its vigilance for ever so short a time. The threat of Bolshevism, already flaring upon the horizon, as a menacing torch over murder-maddened mobs defying law and order, would be a welcome brother. In the chaos created, if the Red Bolsheviks should ever succeed in demoralizing this country, the malefactors of the "Black Hand" Society would thrive as maggots in a cheese. A mixed brand of terrorism would soon show its evil head, a mixed brand that would bring every decent citi-

zen to shudder at the mention of **BLACK BOLSHEVISM**.

In looking into the motives of the men who represented the Sicilian Mafia, or "Black Hand" Society, in this country, I was fortunate to elucidate not a few particulars that go to show how these criminals actually operate.

The Black Handers here would terrorize their less courageous countrymen from the provinces of Southern Italy. They had been at this form of blackmail for some years. Lupo and Morello were the leaders. The money obtained by blackmail and threats of various kinds was divided among a few men, but most of the funds went to Lupo and Morello. As fast as Morello got money he would farm it out by acquiring a barber shop or set up a man in a shoe repairing shop. He also invested in several Italian restaurants. Lupo was in the habit of putting his money into Italian grocery stores. He soon became one of the greatest importers of olive oil and Italian lemons in New York City. It is known that more than \$200,000 was accumulated by the two leaders in a few years. This estimate is based on testimony submitted by people who have com-

plained since of the way in which they were terrorized.

Lupo and Morello were an ideal combination to force leadership upon the "Black Handers" in this country. Morello was the rough, bearish and hairy-looking monster, cruel as a fiend, and always unshaven. Lupo was the well-dressed, soft-spoken, slick-looking "gent" of pretended refinement. He, too, was cruel and heartless. Lupo was the business man of the two. Morello had in his make-up more of the cunning of the born criminal. He was cautious like the fox and ferocious like a maddened bull. Lupo was always suggesting new business ways for the investing of the blackmail money. To Lupo's scheming brain can also be traced the proposition to build a tenement house with such funds as he and Morello could spare from the various barber shops and the importing ventures in which they were interested.

They built one tenement house and sold it at a profit. They built several other tenement houses and likewise sold these at a profit. Every time they would take the money and reinvest in more buildings. It was also at Lupo's suggestion that a scheme was concocted to form an as-

sociation for building purposes with the object of selling stock in the association to Italians from Southern Italy only and exclusively. The association was called the Ignatz Florio Association of Corleone.

The main purpose of this association was to accumulate sufficient funds to erect two rows of Italian tenements in One Hundred and Thirty-seventh Street and One Hundred and Thirty-eighth Street and Cypress Avenue, in the Bronx. Stock in the association was placed on sale for three dollars and five dollars per share. When the dividends came due, payment was made or the dividend turned over to the account of the holder of the stock. The tenements went up in quick succession.

Lupo and Morello finally succeeded in getting the control of the association entirely in their own hands. They used the funds to develop their business ventures, Morello specializing in barber and shoe shops, Lupo sticking to his olive oil importing enterprise. Some of the contractors who put up the tenements were paid, and some were not. Those who had furnished materials for the buildings received some manner of payment, but there were several who got noth-



ing. Law suits began to threaten the two leaders. The holders of the stock began to inquire rather insistently about dividends.

At this juncture, Lupo and Morello stuck their heads together and hatched a deep-dyed scheme for making counterfeit money. They would establish a large counterfeiting plant. They would take the counterfeit stuff and give it to the stockholders in the association. For every thirty-five cents which the association owed to a holder of stock Morello and Lupo would give one full dollar in counterfeit money. The person receiving the counterfeit money would be obliged to dispose of it according to the directions given by Lupo and Morello, who held themselves competent to instruct the members of the association so that the bad money could be disposed of without risk of arrest. This counterfeiting scheme was hatched in the summer of 1908 in the rear of Morello's evil-smelling, dingy little spaghetti joint.

## CHAPTER IV

### COUNTERFEIT BILLS APPEAR

IN May, 1909, counterfeit two-dollar and five-dollar bills began to appear in many of the large cities, such as New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Chicago and Boston. Some of the bills were distributed as far away as New Orleans. The simultaneous appearance of the bills in so many different cities indicated quite plainly that a large band was operating in the distribution of the bad money.

Ever since Lupo and Morello and his associates were arrested in 1908, and were turned out by the Police Magistrate because there was not sufficient evidence to hold them for the barrel murder, I had not lost sight of them. They were being trailed all the time, day and night. As a result of my watchfulness, I learned many things that have since proven to be very useful to the government in its efforts to keep the counterfeiting of money down to a minimum.



Among other things, I learned that Morello made frequent trips to Chicago and other cities where the counterfeit money seemed to flourish. Morello made a flying trip to New Orleans on one occasion when my men tracked him all the way. When his train arrived in Philadelphia we knew he was on board; when the train reached Baltimore we knew he was on the train, and when he arrived at Washington we knew where the "Black-Hand" leader was; and so on, till he arrived in New Orleans. On his arrival there certain Italian confederates were waiting for him and escorted their chief to a little Italian café where a conference was held in a back room lasting a little longer than two hours. Immediately after the conference was over, Morello took the next train back to New York.

Now enters into the story a man by the name of Antonio Cecala. Remember the name of this man, for he plays an important part in the game for the remainder of the story. Cecala, whom we will establish here as the third executive bandit in the Lupo-Morello group, made trips to Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Buffalo. Cecala proved a valuable aid to the two "Black-Hand" captains.

Lupo was tracked by Secret Service men to cities where the counterfeit money was circulating. Another thread of investigation disclosed the not unimportant fact that there were members of the Ignatz Florio Association scattered all over the United States, especially in the populous centers where the five- and two-dollar counterfeit bills were being circulated. Besides, I was getting information daily from banks and merchants that the bills were being "pushed on the market" in abundance. I also learned that Italians from Corleone, Sicily, were the only Italians who were trusted in these centers by the Morello-Lupo gang, pointing to the probability that the bad bills were being circulated and "pushed" through native Corleonians exclusively.

Another clue showed that the bills were being manufactured somewhere in the immediate vicinity of New York City. I fine-combed the State of New York upon learning this. Naturally, my attention was focused on the Corleone Italians in New York City. In this way I gathered that Lupo had fled from his creditors, to whom he owed money in connection with his Italian grocery stores business. I finally succeeded in locating him living in Ardonia, New York, which

is not very far from Highland on the Hudson River.

Past experience with these Morello-Lupo counterfeiters had taught me not to make an arrest until I had the net completely woven around the men who made the money. It is futile to arrest the "pushers-of-the-queer"—that is, the men who distribute the bad money among the little Italian grocery stores and shoe shops, small merchants, and the like. The arrest of these men only serves to warn the manufacturers of the bad money that the Secret Service is on the trail. The factory then closes down, and it is moved away to another location. Even if a conviction of the distributor of the bad money is obtained, no definite information can be obtained from the convicted man. He could not tell the government anything of value even if he wished to "squeal." As a rule, all that a "pusher" or distributor can tell is where he got the bad money.

Here is where Antonio Cecala looms up as a very important criminal factor in the counterfeiting game as plying by the Black Handers under the leadership of Lupo and Morello. Remember this: *Lupo and Morello always remain in the background.* Cecala was the connecting link be-

tween the two leaders and the "pushers-of-the-queer."

Cecala was the man who got in touch with those who wanted to buy the counterfeit money to circulate it at the rate of thirty-five cents on the dollar.

Cecala was careful to deal only with men whom he knew—men who were from Corleone. He would pick six of these as his deputies. These deputies would choose six others, and so on. Cecala made business trips to other cities and took the orders for counterfeit money. He also had the say as to whom should be the agent in each city directly responsible to him. These various deputies were required to give their O. K. before any money would be sent to or given to any person by Cecala.

As soon as Cecala would receive a request from a deputy for money to be passed to certain Italians asking for it, it was Cecala's job to go to Lupo and Morello and obtain their sanction before the money would be handed along down the line from the distributing plant to the person buying it at thirty-five cents on the dollar for the obvious purpose of "pushing" it off on some unwary store-keeper.

The reader can now readily appreciate that with a crafty organization like this the "pusher" could not testify, even if he desired, that he had got the bad money from either Lupo or Morello. In fact, the "pusher" never even heard of either of the leaders except in some indirect way. Always, however, when the money was passed over to the pusher by one of Cecala's deputies or remote subordinates a sinister warning was given not to "squeal" if caught—a warning always portentous with the threat of murder.

To "squeal" meant fatal punishment. The man in the barrel is grim testimony to that fact.

At about this time I had pretty good evidence that the leaders of the counterfeiting gang were none other than Morello and Lupo, as I had suspected from the outset. Still, the time was not ripe to make arrests that would result in dead-sure convictions. It is true the two leaders could be arrested and charged with the making of these counterfeit notes, but where was the evidence connecting them with either the passing or the manufacture of the bills?

Let me here recite the case of Giuseppe Boscarini just to help the reader appreciate how very difficult it would be, at that juncture, to get



Lupo and Morello involved in a way that would satisfy a court and jury that they were legally guilty of making and of passing counterfeit money:

While in Pittston, Pa., I learned that a man in that city named Sam Locino knew Boscarini, a New York agent of the Black Hand Society. After talking with Locino for some time he told me that Boscarini had made several trips to Pittston lately, and that Boscarini was willing to sell counterfeit money to him. When Locino mentioned Boscarini's name I felt sure that the Pittston man was talking of one of Cecala's most active deputies.

In order to see how far Locino could go with Boscarini, and whether Cecala's deputy would turn counterfeit money over to Locino, I made the latter write a letter in the Sicilian dialect to Boscarini asking the deputy of Cecala to send a sample of the counterfeit money in order that Locino might see what it was like and whether he thought he would be able to get rid of some of it in Pittston.

When Locino had finished the letter I took it over to the post office, and with the Mayor of the city and the Chief of Police as witnesses I

had the letter registered and addressed to Boscarini. I came back on the same train that brought the letter to New York, and when Boscarini signed for it at the registry window, this act of his was noted down by men of the Secret Service.

The next day Boscarini went to a sub post-office on the Bowery and bought a special delivery and a two-cent stamp. He placed the stamps upside down on a large white envelope. An agent of the Service saw him buy the stamps and place them on the envelope; also, the agent saw the fictitious return address which Boscarini put on the envelope: the agent saw this as Boscarini put the letter into the slot at the sub-station.

I returned to Pittston on the same train with the letter and notified Locino that the letter was addressed to him at the General Delivery. He got the letter and opened it in my presence. It contained a counterfeit two-dollar bill and a counterfeit five-dollar bill of the kind made by the Morello gang.

Then I sent Locino to New York and gave him thirty-five dollars with which to buy one hundred dollars' worth of the counterfeit money



from Boscarini. I saw to it that the genuine money was secretly marked for the purpose of "getting" it on some member of the gang when the raid would come and in which I contemplated taking Morello and Lupo together with Cecala, Boscarini and others.

Locino contrived to meet Boscarini at Mulberry and Prince Streets, and the two talked it over. An appointment was made by Boscarini to meet Locino again on the same day.

One of the things I had ferreted out meanwhile was to locate the headquarters for the distribution of the bad money as being at No. 231 East Ninety-seventh Street. Secret Service men had hired apartments across the street from this place, and were watching every one that entered and left the place. Their view was interfered with by great boxes of macaroni and other Italian groceries piled high in the windows of the store. My men also learned that it was here, behind the macaroni boxes, that secret conferences were being held between Cecala, Morello, Lupo and others. A conference would never last more than fifteen minutes. The store was run by Morello, Lupo and others. It was a wholesale store. The small Italian grocers in

New York were compelled to make their purchases there at the peril of being wrecked by a bomb if they did not. To this store went Boscarini when he left Locino at Mulberry and Prince Streets. At the Ninety-seventh Street store Boscarini met Cecala and several others of the gang. Returning to meet Locino, Boscarini handed over a roll of bills to the Pittston man. Secret Service men saw the bills handed over. Locino handed the bills to me. When the bills were examined they were found to be counterfeits of the same make as those previously sent to Locino in the letter.

Even then we made no arrest. It would have been a foolish piece of business at that time, for I was busy on other ends of the case pulling in valuable threads of evidence. After the lapse of a week Locino came to New York from Pittston and purchased more of the counterfeit money from Boscarini, giving in return genuine money, which was secretly marked.

Finally the time arrived when the government had evidence which was deemed sufficient to convict most of the band. The raid was made. When Cecala was seized and searched there was found on him two of the genuine bills with the

secret marks which I had placed on the bills given to Locino.

Locino's testimony, the reader will see, was necessary in order to secure a conviction of Boscarini and Cecala. By Locino's telling what part he had played in the game the government was put in position to verify the following complete chain of evidence: Locino writing the letter to Boscarini and asking for the counterfeit samples; Boscarini receiving the letter, and receipting for it; Boscarini posting the answering letter to Locino, the letter on which the Secret Service man saw the stamps placed upside down on the long white envelope. Then, further, Locino receiving the letter at the General Delivery, and his opening it in my presence and finding the counterfeit two- and five-dollar bills. Locino could testify that he got counterfeit money from Boscarini and had given him the genuine money secretly marked in return for the spurious bills, thus directly connecting Boscarini with the charge of passing spurious money. Also, Locino could verify my testimony of secret marks being placed on the bills, so that when the marked bills were found on Cecala, Locino could identify them as the ones he had given to Boscarini in

return for the counterfeit money passed by Boscarini to him. Locino could thus connect Boscarini and Cecala. Other evidence connecting Cecala with Boscarini was in my possession, but which I need not give here. It merely served to corroborate the testimony of Lucino.

Locino was perfectly well aware what it meant to go on the witness stand and "squeal." He had heard of the man in the barrel. After some weeks of thinking the matter over Locino loosened up and declared that he had an ancient wrong to right! He never explained to me further just what his grievance against the "Black Handers" was. He finally made up his mind to take the stand and tell what he knew.

Needless to say that Boscarini was sentenced to fifteen years in the Federal Penitentiary at Atlanta, Georgia. But it is worth mentioning here that shortly after Boscarini received his sentence Locino was shot twice in the back of the head at Pittston. He survived, however, and is confident that he will be able to take care of himself for many years to come.

The point I want to make clear by relating this story of facts is as follows:

I traced the connection of Cecala with the

passing of these counterfeit bills by finding the genuine money with the secret marks on him. Nevertheless, I had not reached the leaders, Lupo and Morello, who were still in the background serenely confident that they could not be legally implicated in the passing or the manufacturing of the counterfeit bills.

True, we could prove that Cecala and Morello and Lupo had met many times, and that they had been to the houses of one another and eaten at the same table. Other evidence of a like nature could be produced; but such evidence was not sufficient to convict the two leaders of the charge of either passing, having in their possession, making or causing to be made, any of the counterfeit notes which were being poured into the great centers of population at one and the same time. Had I stopped with Locino's testimony, I never could have got the leaders. But the Secret Service never leaves the trail of the counterfeiter, and the way in which the long arm of the government reached out for the "Black Hand" leaders, who loomed in the shadowy distance like the silhouettes of devils incarnate, will be told here for the first time.



## CHAPTER V

### THE GREENHORN'S STORY

IN the latter part of June, 1907, a young Italian landed in New York from the southern part of Italy. He was an ambitious sort of clever chap. He not only spoke his mother tongue well, but he had a good command of Spanish and French and was posted on several of the dialects current in the "boot" or southern part of Italy. He knew very little of the English tongue, however. Among his various accomplishments he was also a practical printer.

The career of this young man up to the time of his landing at Ellis Island is significant, to say the least. He was a native of the little town of Cananzero in Calabria, one of the provinces of southern Italy. He had been a teacher there and had taught technical subjects. Later on he taught in private, and finally became an instructor in government schools. From Italy he had

gone to Brazil, where he spent seven years of his time. He had engaged in teaching school there, and he had also worked at the printing trade in Rio de Janeiro, the capital of Brazil. At one time he had been engaged by the Italian Consul at Rio de Janeiro to assist that official in legal matters.

The young man's name was Antonio Viola Comito.

In course of time he proved to be the connecting link that joined the chain of evidence identifying Lupo and Morello legally and inseparately with the counterfeiting gang which manufactured and distributed the counterfeit money in the summer of 1909. His own story in full, which has never been made public before, is given here. This story of his contains many statements which ought to interest the public, statements that were not divulged by Comito even at the trial where he was the pivot upon which turned the conviction of the most notorious and troublesome band of counterfeiters this country ever knew. As a result of his damaging evidence, the gang vowed to destroy him. He has changed his identity completely meanwhile, however, and was last heard from in South America,



where he is very prosperous. He has a good deal more courage than his own story, as told by him, would indicate. He will never be reached by the Black-Hand gang without several of them paying with their lives for his. He is confident of that.

Comito's own story follows:

"The reader will pardon me; if, in reading this story of my life in New York, there are errors of language and periods not well expressed.

"During the latter part of 1908 and a good part of 1909, I had occasion to know many malefactors who horrified me from the very start, and whom I gradually came to fear as I studied their brutal character. I refrained from denouncing these men to the police because I was constantly in danger of losing my life had I done so.

"These men were the leaders of the notorious 'Black-Hand' Society, which spreads terror among the Italians all over the United States. While among them I studied the badness, the power, the brutality and the arrogance of the counterfeiter and the assassin.

"They were not a very civil lot. They were villains incarnate. One of their characteristic

traits is that one alone would not commit a crime because of cowardice. When a 'job' was to be executed it was always carried out by three or four directed by a 'corporal,' who was put in charge by the head bandit. This 'corporal' bossed the job, remaining all the while in the distance so that in case the operations of those committing the deed were discovered by the police the 'corporal' would be sure to escape and report the circumstances to the head bandit of the society. The head bandit would in turn notify all the other members, when a counsel would be called at which steps would be taken to aid those apprehended by the police.

"What puzzled me not a little was the fact that when it came to going to trial for an offense no eye-witness would ever appear in court to tell of the crime with which the members under arrest might be charged. Those arrested usually gave fictitious names, and when placed on trial they were always freed. These men governed their association by secret orders. They operated on a vast scale and extended their crime even to the kidnapping of little children."

At this point Comito enters a long apology to those people of Southern Italy who are good

citizens and law-abiding. He does not refer in this article, he says, to the honest Sicilians, who labor and earn their living honestly. It is of the malefactors, he says, that he speaks.

Comito then tells of entering New York and meeting his brother at the Battery. He relates his sensations at seeing the tall buildings of New York and the hurrying crowds in the noisy streets.

After going to the home of his brother in Bleeker Street, Comito says:

“During the dinner I was carefully advised by my uncle, an intelligent man and very cautious, having served the Italian government for twelve years as non-commissioned officer in the line infantry. He said, ‘Do not acquire bad friendships. Be careful of traps that strangers may lay for you. There exists in New York a band of malefactors which bear the name of Black Hand. Every day this band commits crimes, assassinating persons, setting fire to houses, breaking in doors, exploding bombs, and kidnapping children.’

“He told me also never to tell any one where I worked and how much I earned. He advised me to think only of bettering my condition and

that of my family, because in America, in time, the man with a good will can acquire a good position."

Perhaps these words that follow may be of interest to the reader in getting an insight into the mentality of the newly arrived immigrant. Says Comito:

"My only wish was to work and put aside something; to economize, and so help the condition of my family and provide some day for my daughter that she might have a profession. I did not think of evil, and hoped from day to day to find occupation. I was a printer, and, though I did not know English, I felt confident of finding work in some Italian printing-office."

Comito then tells of finding employment in the Italian printing house of M. Dassori, at No. 178 Park Row, where he was getting along well. He tells of sending money to Italy to his wife and children. He tells of his brother here introducing him to honest Italians of the working class and of how he joined the order of the Sons of Italy and also the Foresters of America. Comito then relates his rapid rise in the Foresters, mentioning also how he became Supreme Deputy of the Order of the Sons of Italy, be-

sides being chosen a member for the Congress of Italians abroad, which was held in Rome in 1908. He dwells on his losing employment because of lack of work in the place where he was employed. After getting employment again he finds himself once more out of a place, about the beginning of September, 1908. He tells very frankly of taking up with a lady named Caterina and how they shared the apartment which he furnished as well as his means afforded. He and Caterina lived together, he says, "respecting one another as husband and wife." Describing his affair with Caterina, who, by the way, enters in some measure into the counterfeiting story, Comito says:

"I, together with Caterina, lived agreeably, and what was earned weekly was divided equally, and we did not take into account which earned the more or the less. We made an honest front with friends. I discharged my duties with the societies with zeal."



## CHAPTER VI

### DON PASQUALE, BLACK-HAND SKIRMISHER

HERE is where Comito gets into touch with a skirmisher, if I may use the word, of the Black Handers. The skirmisher is the scout for Lupo and Morello who are, as usual, in the distance, their minds ablaze with the idea of getting rich beyond the dreams of Aladdin by a bold counterfeiting stroke. Comito is a printer out of work. Lupo and Morello have agents who tell them of such things. Comito might be the man to run a printing press and print the counterfeit bills. And so, I will turn you over to Comito. Listen to his own story once more:

“On the evening of November 5, 1908, I was at a meeting of the Order of the Sons of Italy, being a duty I owed the society as Supreme Deputy to attend the meetings of the different lodges. As was the custom toward the end of the meeting I chatted with the various members

of the order, some of whom I knew by name and others whom I knew only by sight.

“That same night a member by the name of Don Pasquale, a Sicilian, came to me, clasped my hand, and without further ceremony said: ‘Professor, will you take a walk with me? I have something to say that might interest you.’

“When we were outside, Don Pasquale said to me:

“‘I know you are seeking work and that you are a good printer. A friend of mine is proprietor of a printing shop in Philadelphia. If you wish I can recommend you; but you must go to Philadelphia to work.’

“‘It makes no difference to me where I work,’ ” was Comito’s answer.

Don Pasquale got Comito’s address and said that he would arrange to have his Philadelphia printer friend meet Comito at the latter’s home. Comito then explains that the title “Don” is used by Sicilians as a mark of respect among the working class, and that the word “Uncle” is employed in addressing people advanced in years in the same sense.

Comito recalls the knock on his door on the morning of November 6. He says:



"I opened and saw Don Pasquale with his friend. I motioned them to enter and sit down. Don Pasquale said: 'Mr. Comito, I present to you my friend, Don Antonio Cecala, proprietor of a printing shop in Philadelphia.'

" 'Are you a printer?' asked Cecala.

" 'Yes,' I answered.

" 'Well,' he continued, 'I am the proprietor of a shop in Philadelphia and in need of a trustworthy man who can take care of my affairs when I am absent looking out for my business as an inspector of Singer Sewing Machines. You can come to an agreement with me and establish yourself with your wife in Philadelphia. In that way I can be sure of your honesty,' said Cecala to me.

" 'But,' I replied, 'I don't think that I am going to your printing shop to act as boss. You have other men that work there?'

" 'Yes, there are other men, but they are not capable for the trade I have because they do not do this kind of work.'

"And saying this, Cecala showed me some money order blanks, stamped envelopes, commercial papers and some hand bills. I replied that it was just such work that I could do,

and that if the men employed by him were not able to do such work they were not printers.

“‘Well, as you are a practical man at such work, you may remain alone in the shop and will assume full responsibility. Therefore, prepare your things and tell your Mrs. not to continue working. However, if she wants to work in Philadelphia, then she may do so. Together you will soon be rich.’”

Cecala agreed to pay the rent due for the rooms occupied by Comito and his mistress, besides what he owed elsewhere. The weekly salary was agreed upon, and in the event that Comito should not care to remain at the job he was to receive his return fare to New York.

The reader will appreciate the humor of this arrangement as he gets along further in the story.

“‘Then you wish that the lady come with me?’

“‘Surely. The lady is necessary for you.’

“‘But don’t you want me to go first and find a house to live in?’

“‘There is no need of that. The house is ready. It is my property.’

“‘When you say that you will provide for everything, I am ready to leave to-morrow.’

"In the evening Caterina came home from work. I told her what had happened. She did not care to leave her work, adding that we were without means and could not afford to undertake the trip. I assured her, however, that all expenses would be paid, and she finally consented to come along. We prepared the household furnishings for shipment, Cecala insisting that we take all the stuff with us."

Comito then tells of being taken to a photo-material store. Cecala bought a camera, some plates, bath platters, chemicals, a tripod, paper, and a case. Comito was induced to go to the printing house, where he had been formerly employed, and make a "dicker" for the purchase of a printing press. The press was secured and everything was made ready for the trip to Philadelphia. Then Cecala called and introduced a certain "Don Turi," otherwise Cina, as his godfather. "He is a rich proprietor in Philadelphia," said Cecala. "Do not mind his ordinary clothes; he is a man of gentle manners." Comito's own description of the rough looking Cina adds a streak of humor to the situation. As to "gentle manners" Cina almost maimed Comito when he shook hands with him. Comito was

also introduced to a fellow by the name of Sylvester.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon on the same day that the whole pack of them—Cecala, Cina, Don Pasquale and Sylvester—rushed into the little apartment of Comito, and, as he says, "without any talking, began to label the furniture." This move was made after Cecala had paid the rent that morning.

Comito had not put any address on his stuff because Cecala had assured him that all the furniture would be put on a wagon, and that the wagon and all would go under his name to Philadelphia. Comito observed a bundle labeled: "A. Cina, Highland, New York."

Turning to Cecala, he said: "Don't we go to Philadelphia?"

"A—ha, ha, ha—a, ha, a, ha, ha, ha, ha," leered Cecala. "This is the place the boat stops and then we go twenty minutes by foot. Have no fear; we will go by carriage."

"Do we not go by rail?"

"No," grunted Cecala. "It costs too much, and we cannot load all your goods on the train."

Upon inquiring what time Cecala expected to

arrive at Philadelphia, Comito was informed about eight o'clock, and that it would be all the better to arrive after dark because "no one will see what we are doing, and we will give an accounting to no one." Cecala also assured Comito that there would be no delay once they got off the boat, but that they would hurry to Cecala's house where "we will eat and drink wine and warm ourselves."

In this manner Comito's fears were lulled to sleep by the promises of future prosperity that were held out to him. There would never be any more worry or struggle for gain as far as Comito was concerned, according to the assurances of Cecala and the others. Life would flow along like a pleasant dream with no worries of any kind!

"It was about 4:30 P. M. of that same day, November 11, 1908, when I and Caterina, together with Cecala, Cina, Don Pasquale and Sylvester, went on board the boat," continues Comito. "I was fully convinced that we were going to Philadelphia. I was quite happy thinking that by working honestly I would prosper. When we were about two hours out from the pier Cecala came to me and said:

“ ‘Mr. Comito, we are about to make a bad showing.’

“ ‘Why?’ I asked.

“ ‘Because I have not enough money to pay the fares of all of us.’

“ ‘Why pay for all?’

“ ‘Because they are my friends, and my godfather. Then, too, you saw how they worked.’

“ ‘But they could have remained in New York.’

“ ‘No. They will help put up the press, etc.

“ ‘This is just a circumstance,’ explained Cecala. ‘I imagined that Cina had money to spare, but he has forgotten his pocketbook. We are short five dollars.’

“Not knowing what to do about it, I remained silent. After a while Cecala turned to Caterina and inquired: ‘Mrs., have you any money with you?’

“ ‘I have just five dollars,’ Caterina replied innocently.

“ ‘Well, give it to me because I need it. I will give it back to-morrow, as soon as I get to the house,’ suggested the bandit.

“Caterina stepped aside and produced a five-



dollar bill from her stocking where she had hidden it for an emergency.

"I took Caterina aside and asked her why she had given the money to Cecala. She said it would be all right, that she would get it back to-morrow. I did not talk any more. I took a rest on a lounge, until about nine o'clock, when I heard the boat's whistle. It was the signal of our approaching a dock. I jumped up, thinking I was at Philadelphia, and woke Caterina. I was surprised when Cecala informed me that Philadelphia was a little farther on, and that we would get off at the next stop. Making further inquiries as to the location of Philadelphia, I was informed in a very brutal manner by Cina that he did not know when the boat would arrive, but he guessed about one o'clock. Right then and there it dawned on me that I was not dealing with honest people, but with a dangerous pack who were probably trying to get me into a trap.

"When Caterina heard that we would not arrive until one A. M., she spoke cross to me and said that if any harm came to her I was responsible. I consoled her as well as I could and resumed my rest on the lounge.



"It was about half-past twelve that night when a long, resounding toot that echoed in the mountains announced our arrival at a stopping place. When the deck hand announced the name of the place, which did not sound very much like Philadelphia, I asked Cecala whether we should go ashore here.

"He said yes.

"It was a freezing cold night. There was snow on the ground. Caterina and I were chilled to the bone and very nervous.

" 'We will all stop at my godfather's for the night, and, if necessary, for a day or so until we are rested,' announced Cecala. 'From there we will continue our trip to Philadelphia, which is one station beyond this place. We will do the rest of the journey by wagon.

" 'This is Highland,<sup>1</sup> New York,' said Cecala, when I inquired the name of the place.

"After a short wait in the dark near the dock we heard a wagon rushing up at top speed. It was driven by a man whom Cecala introduced me to as another godfather of his who was named Vincenzo Giglio. Cina and Giglio are brothers-

<sup>1</sup> Highland is about seven miles from Ardonia, New York, where the reader will remember I had discovered Lupo was in hiding after he ran away from his creditors.

in-law and own the place where I was to stop that night, Cecala told me.

"We arrived at Cina's house and found a table prepared for dinner. While Cina invited Caterina and me to sit down, the wives of Cina and Giglio brought on stuffed chickens, young goats meat, baked potatoes, wine. The dessert was of cheese, apples and pears, raised, Cina said, on the premises.

"My furniture was placed in a house near that of Cina and I was left there to live with Caterina on scanty fare and without money until, as Cecala told me, the printing shop would be in readiness. I was told to have my mail directed at the box in Highland, New York, where Cina had his mail sent. There were five little children playing about in the Cina house. I heard Cecala tell Cina to make out a list of food-stuffs needed saying that he would see Ignazio (Lupo) and have him ship it up to the farm.

"Cecala then took his departure to look after his business as a 'Singer Sewing Machine Inspector.'"

For three days after arriving at Cina's, Comito says, he and Caterina ate at Cina's table. They were waiting for the supplies to arrive

from Lupo, and which Comito and Caterina were to eat at their own table. 'Concerning this time Comito says:

"In the three following days, Caterina and I ate at Cina's table while we were waiting for supplies. The conversation was about nothing but homicides, assassinations, and robberies. At times I thought my hair would stand on end, but I tried my best to appear unconcerned even when Caterina glanced at me in dismay.

"On a certain cold and rainy day, I shall never forget, while we were all huddled around the stove, Cina began to spin his yarns and boasted, among other exploits, that he had been a trusted man of the notorious bandit Varsalona. In this way Cina had become implicated in the murder of a school teacher in his native town, Bevona, in the province of Girgenta, Sicily, and had been obliged to flee the country and make his way to America. Cina also remarked that he was married in Tampa, Florida, where he had worked for seven years as a cigar maker. He married the sister of his intimate friend Giglio.

"As we were about to go to bed that night I told Caterina that we had better plan to get back to New York somehow. There was no

longer any doubt in my mind but that we were in the hands of confirmed criminals.

“‘How about the fare?’ answered Caterina. ‘I have no money at present. If you want money ask godfather Cina.’

“I did not sleep a wink that night. I was blaming myself for having induced Caterina to come along. In the morning I hurried over to talk to Cecala to make arrangements for our return to New York, but to my surprise Giglio informed me that Cecala and Don Pasquale had gone the night before to New York.

“I complained to Giglio of the manner in which Cecala had left me behind with Caterina without money or return fare to New York.

“With apparent good grace Giglio replied that I should have a little patience and wait until Cecala returned.

“‘Think of eating and drinking. Don’t worry. Enjoy yourself,’ he said with a grin.

“The manner of Giglio’s talk quieted me a little and calmed my nerves; he also said that when it was not raining I could go about the farm to see what was cultivated and could roam around and forget about returning to New York.

“Caterina and I had to worry along in that

godforsaken place until December 7, 1908, when I was informed that we would be moved to the printing shop. A wagon was coming for our furniture at three o'clock in the morning."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PLANT OF THE COUNTERFEITERS

“AND a truck did come about three A. M., December 8, 1908. Along with us came Giglio and another man named Bernardo, a man with a ruddy complexion and a large mouth. We crossed through the village and after about two and a half hours' ride arrived in front of an old, deserted stone house situated in the woods, off the road about twenty paces. Bernardo said laughingly:

“‘Here is the printing shop. Don't you like it?’

“‘No,’ I replied.

“‘Tell that to Cecala when he comes,’ said Cina.

“‘But this is no place for a printing shop,’ I continued, Caterina watching me with glaring eyes.

“‘Come, don't lose time,’ roared Cina. ‘Un-



load the stuff before some one comes along and we are seen.'

" 'I will go back with Caterina.'

" 'Where to?' inquired Cina.

" 'To the house where I was; then to New York.'

" 'The house where you were is rented to a party coming from New York. You cannot stay in my house because there are too many children there. When Cecala comes you can speak to him.'

" 'But I don't want to stay alone here in the woods.'

" 'Have no fear. My brother-in-law and Bernardo will stay with you. And then, of whom are you afraid? No one passes on this road except at 10 A. M., when the letter carrier goes by.'

"By the time this conversation ended my furniture was all inside the door. Cina told Giglio to get the stove ready for it was very cold. Cina hinted that he was going away soon. Hearing Cina say this, I told him I wanted to return to the village.

" 'You are crazy,' he said. 'Have you money to pay me for returning your goods? Besides,

I am not going to the village. I am going six miles in the other direction to buy hay for the horses. Cecala may be back to-morrow. Talk to him. My brother will bring you stuff to eat. So, why worry?

"Later, I overheard Cina whisper to Giglio:

" 'I got close to Caterina, who was in the door-step almost crying, and tried to comfort her, saying that when we were left alone we would get away.

" 'Where is the fare?' Caterina is supposed to have asked him.

"Finally Cina departed. Giglio and Bernardo remained and began to arrange the furniture as best they could.

"Calmed of my anger, I went into the house and looked around. I found a large room that served as a kitchen and a back room for a store-room on the ground floor. Up the stairway and on the second floor I found three small rooms and a large room. Another flight of steps led to a garret. In the large room on the second floor I saw the press. It had been brought there while I was remaining at the farmhouse near Cina's. It was the same press I had dickered for. There was a dilapidated bed in one

of the three small rooms on this floor, which Giglio had fixed up the best he could under the circumstances. As I was looking around the place I was convinced that I had been led into a trap of some kind, but it never entered my head that I had been brought up there for the purpose of printing counterfeit money! I thought that perhaps they wanted me for printing obscene literature, such as is prohibited by law, but on looking closer I did not discover any type, and my mind began to get busy trying to figure out what a press without type and accessories could be intended for placed in a desolate house in the backwoods.

"It must have been about eleven o'clock that morning when I saw a short-set man, possibly twenty-five or thirty years old, driving up. He was a man of dark complexion with a large moustache, dressed like a farmer with big shoes and red handkerchief around his neck, wearing a cap 'A la Sicilian.' He proved to be Cina's brother Peppino. He entered the house and said that he was bringing the supplies. He set down a bag of 100 pounds of potatoes, about forty pounds of flour to make bread, a bottle of olive oil, a case of maccaroni, olives, smoked fish,

salt, kerosene, onions and a small form of cheese, as well as twenty small cans containing tomato sauce. Unloading this stuff without ever uttering a word, the short-set fellow waved his hand at Giglio and Bernardo as he started on his way. Before leaving the house, though, he uttered the words 'Be careful.'

"Giglio now ordered Caterina to cook, saying that he was hungry. Caterina, realizing that she had to deal with bad people, prepared a meal. Four days went by and on the fifth Giglio and Bernardo left, saying that they were going to get something to eat as the provisions brought by Peppino could not last much longer. We were then living on baked potatoes and plain bread.

"I remained alone with Caterina in that isolated house for two days without seeing any one. It was snowing. I could not go out. Those days passed like so many years. Caterina was taken ill with a fever. I almost despaired. Where could I go for help? I knew no one and there was no house nearby. During those awful days suicide was continually in my mind. Then again the thought would come to me—why should you? What for? Why abandon my wife, my

parents, my relatives? No, I reflected, better fight it out to the end and see what those bandits have up their sleeve.

"On the morning of December 15, 1908, it was snowing large flakes and it was bitter cold. There came a knock on the door. Cecala and Cina entered. Both of them laughed boisterously when they saw me.

"This angered me, and I declared that I was not to be treated any longer as if I were a child.

"‘Very well,’ said Cecala. ‘If you were a child you would never do for us. We are dealing with you because we know that you are a serious and intelligent fellow, otherwise . . . well, don’t shout when you talk to us. You must calm yourself because you are dealing with gentlemen and not with villains.’

"‘I know that; but your actions are not those of gentlemen.’

"‘When you know more then you will not talk so much,’ said Cecala in a low tone.

"Caterina had heard voices and was coming downstairs:

"‘Mr. Cecala,’ she said, ‘it is necessary that I go to New York because I am ill and feverish. Give me the fare and I will go.’

“ ‘In this weather?’ asked Cecala.

“ ‘Yes.’

“ ‘When?’

“ ‘To-day.’

“ ‘Go away; I have no money.’

“ ‘You have no money? Give me back the five dollars that I gave you on the boat.’

“ ‘I have only two dollars, which I need very much.’

“ ‘You do not consider me sick?’

“ ‘Surely I do. So much that we have brought a chicken to cook.’

“ ‘I don’t cook because I am not well, and I am cold,’ promptly assured Caterina.

“ ‘Madame,’ continued Cecala with mock courtesy, ‘be happy in the thought that in a month from now we will all be rich. All these queer ideas will pass from your mind then. Go ahead and cook. Here is the stuff. From to-morrow on you will not be alone. You will have company, and you will be happy.’

“Cecala now turned abruptly to me saying in a sinister tone of voice: ‘Don Antonio, come upstairs. I have news for you.’

“We entered the large room where the press was standing. Cecala took a package from his



coat pocket. 'Here is the work that we must execute. We must print counterfeit money!' His rat-like eyes froze me to the spot. 'Here are the plates. Compare them with the original. Without any one knowing it we will soon be rich. The money that is to be counterfeited is the Canadian five-dollar note. Already I have several requests, and if we can do perfect work we will print a million. I have brought with me one hundred thousand sheets of paper of four qualities and different sizes so that we could choose the best grade from the lot. The Canadian is not hard to counterfeit because there is no silk in it like in the American money. I am sure that we will succeed. As to buying the inks, have no fear. In fact, I have already bought the inks, and will consult with you in choosing the right kind for this work. No one will come here except our own people. It is just as well that Caterina remain here. If a stranger should pass and see the lady he would imagine that there is a family living in the house and that would not rouse suspicion. So the lady had better stay.'

"I drew a deep breath. I saw the trap closing around me. As calmly as I could I replied:

“‘This is not my work. I do not even know how to prepare the press.’

“‘Do not begin to find excuses,’ barked Cecala. ‘This work must be done. You will leave here when I tell you that there is no more need of you. Not before.’

“‘But this is very difficult work. It is out of my line,’ I ventured.

“‘No matter. If you are a printer you know how to do it. I will assist you. Look at these plates. See whether they are all well made.’

“I looked at the plates and said I could not distinguish which was which. I saw five pieces of zinc engraved on either side of which was the ‘Bank of Montreal—Canada. Five-dollar note.’ The pieces were separate, according to the colors; that is, two large plates for the green side, and one black; on the face was a large ‘V’ printed in the center, and on the light green the seal in a violet color. The serial numbers were in red.

“I explained that there were several things required before any printing could be done.

“Cecala now grabbed me by the shoulders and fairly hissed these words at me:

“‘Don Antonio, you are the person who must

execute this work under my direction and the guidance of some one else that you will know in the future. *Your life would be lost if you should reveal our secret to any one.* We are twenty men banded together in this affair, and we will respect you as one of us. Caterina will be respected as well, and when we are done we will give her a sum of money to go to Italy; but you must remain with our society for life. We will provide for you and better your condition, and that of your family, without ever revealing to your parents the secret. If you want to write to your brother in New York and your aunt be careful to say that you are working for a priest in Philadelphia telling them that the address is a village near Philadelphia. When you wish to come to New York I must know about it. I will send your fare and tell you where to find me so that I can give you the return fare. Courageous persons will help you and guard you in case there should be some spy on the trail. No one will come to this place, because the land about the house is our property, and it would be hard for detectives to discover us without some one taking them here. This place is not sus-

pected. The money printed here is to be changed in Canada. No one can suppose that it is printed in this little village. Without offering any excuses you must do this work. Knowing that you are a serious man I talk to you with frankness. During the time that you remain here you will lack nothing to eat, but you must bear in mind that we are not big capitalists yet, and until we make some money you must suffer a little.'

"The voice of the 'Black-Hand' Society had spoken. I was the unwilling tool. To refuse meant death. So I resolved to play my part as well as I could and merely answered that I would do what they asked but not to expect perfect work as I was not a practical plate printer, and had never seen counterfeit money before nor printed it.

"Caterina now called us downstairs to eat. At table Cina told Caterina to abandon the idea of returning to New York. He told her that she was to remain and cook for the people that would come, that she would be paid for her work. Caterina made no answer to this.

"Afterwards I went upstairs with Cina and

Cecala and began to set up the press in the large room near a window that faced the road, Cecala remarking that there was need of light.

“Then, after a sinister pause, Cecala began to tackle me again with a speech:

“‘Don Antonio, I also have American two-dollar plates, but they need retouching. Some of the lines of the black are not precise. We will print twenty thousand dollars of the Canadian money in five-dollar notes, and then fifty thousand of these two-dollar United States notes.’ Saying this Cecala showed me the plates, which he took from his coat pocket. He made me examine them and I observed that they were of check letter A, plate number 1111. He wrapped them up in a cloth and put them in his coat pocket, saying that he would return them when he brought the inks. The plates for the two-dollar bills were in three pieces; that is, the green side, the face or black side, and the seal and counter of dark blue.

“That night Cina and Cecala slept in the house. In the morning they went off at a very early hour leaving me alone and promising to return in a few days. On the morning of December 20th, 1908, Cecala and Giglio returned in com-



pany with another man, a Sicilian, and dressed like one. The stranger took from a bag the wood blocks that were needed for the plates which Cecala had had retouched. The stranger was presented to me as Uncle Vincent. Cecala then told Caterina to prepare a meal as Uncle had traveled all night and was cold and hungry.

“We went upstairs to mount the plates on the blocks. Cecala put them in the chase, and, like an experienced man, made the press ready for the green side of the counterfeit money. Cecala also prepared the green ink and then made me print a proof to see whether the work was correct. We worked that day in making proofs because we could not get the right shade of green. Finally, we mixed in a little yellow and hit the right shade of green for the Canadian note. It was necessary, however, to let the ink dry in order to see whether the shade was exactly right. That day the whole conversation was of getting rich. Millions were to come to each of us. They went so far as to figure out just what would be the share of each at the end of the month, selling the stuff at 35 cents on the dollar. All were as happy as lords. All except Caterina and I.



"At about 4 P.M. Cecala took four of the five-dollar note proofs, those which were most like the genuine, and left for New York together with Cina saying that he had to show them to persons more competent. This left Giglio and Uncle Vincent with me.

"On December 23, Cina came to the house bringing a wagon load of coal and after unloading it told me that he received a letter from New York calling for other proofs but darker in shade. I mixed up some more ink, and after running off the proofs I handed them to Cina, who took them away with him. After about eight days I had received no notice of printing or of the proofs when on January 2, 1909, Cecala and Cina suddenly returned and ordered that the work proceed. The notes were to be printed in the last shade of ink that Cecala had prepared. No more proofs were to be sent to New York, Cecala said, because it was very dangerous. One of the gang might be picked up and the notes found on him. They told me to go by the genuine note for shade and that when I struck off a proof to show it to Uncle Vincent, who was very proficient.

"They told me to hurry and to work fast.

They needed the two-dollar notes badly because Cecala had received an order from a Brooklyn banker for \$50,000 counterfeit money. After they were through talking and gossiping I turned to Cecala and said:

“‘Mr. Cecala, on the fifth instant I must go to New York to attend a meeting of the Grand Court of the Foresters of America, for the annual installation of officers takes place on that night. I must necessarily attend because I am an officer and you will, of course, provide my fare.’

“‘What do you care for the society?’ sneered Cecala. ‘We are in so much need of you, and you are finding new excuses. Leave these things go and work.’

“‘I must attend.’

“‘Well, I will send your fare from New York. In case I do not come back, see me at 92 East Fourth Street, fourth floor.’

“While this conversation was taking place Giglio and Uncle Vincent had picked out the paper stock of which four thousand sheets were counted out. Cecala, assisted by me, made the press ready. Experiments were made to see if the impression was right. After Cecala had got

everything in readiness he told Uncle Vincent to ink the press from time to time as there was no fountain on it. I fed the press by putting the sheets in and taking them out as they were printed. Giglio would take the printed sheets and spread them out in the garret to dry.

“At 2 P. M., on January 4th, 1909, the green impressions were completed on the Canadian notes. Not seeing any one appear with the fare to New York I gave my watch to Giglio and begged him to go to his brother-in-law and sell it. Returning the next morning Giglio handed me one dollar and a half, and said that I was to go on the 2 P. M. train. His brother-in-law, Cina, would come with the horse and carriage and accompany me to the station.

“About noon Cina came. Caterina said she did not want to be left alone with two strange men, and asked to be taken to Cina’s family until I returned. This was agreed to and Cina left her at his house and took me to the Poughkeepsie station. I arrived in New York at 5 P. M. and met Cecala at the station; he feigned surprise at seeing me. He excused himself for not sending me the fare and explained that he had no money.

“Cecala conducted me to Thirty-ninth Street

and First Avenue where he introduced me to a certain Giovanni Pecoraro, a wine merchant. He invited me to eat some salame cheese and fruit. We drank some wine, and then Pecoraro told me to return to this store and get two bottles of liquor, which I was to take to Highland on my way back to the plant.

"Coming out of the store, Cecala led me to a house in the same street near Avenue A where there were six men in a room playing cards. Cecala called one of them aside—a young man about thirty, and requested him to give five dollars to me. This young man, whom Cecala called Salvatore, responded readily and gave me the money as I was leaving. Cecala now accompanied me to the meeting room of the Foresters of America. He told me that at 11 P. M. he would call for me and accompany me to the station, and that I was not to stop over night nor see any of my relatives.

"After the meeting I found Cecala and Pecoraro waiting outside for me. They made me get on a car and go to Pecoraro's store, where I was given three bottles of liquor and some salame wrapped in one package. They accompanied me to Hoboken where, at 3 A. M. on

January 6, 1909, I boarded the train for Highland. Arriving there, I found Cina's brother, Peppino, waiting with a carriage. I got into the vehicle and he brought me to the stone house, that is, the counterfeiting plant. The reader will observe that I was shadowed by the 'Black Handers' every step of the way. It would have been impossible for me to make a break-away without courting death. During the month of January, 1909, the work of counterfeiting at the farmhouse proceeded without interruption. From time to time Cina would show up with potatoes and flour. He would examine the work, help for an hour or so spreading the money on the floor to dry, and then return to his farm."



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE COW THAT CAUSED A DOUBLE MURDER

“ONE day while we were at work on the counterfeit money, Uncle Vincent told me that he had been a cattle raiser in his home town. He was out on a farm where he saw a yoke of oxen, which he wanted to purchase. One of the men who owned the oxen, while arguing about the price, said something offensive to Uncle. Without saying a word Uncle aimed his rifle and shot the man in the chest, killing him instantly. The other man ran away. He was overtaken by a rifle shot and knocked dead about fifty paces away from the first man.

“With a double murder on his conscience Uncle Vincent cast about for a getaway. As he was short of money he searched the first man that he had murdered and took from him two hundred and fifty lire. Returning to town Uncle wrote a long letter to his family notifying them



of what happened and took a train for Palermo. There he contracted with a sail-boat man who landed him at Tunis in Africa. There he found means to get his fare and went to Tokio, Japan. In Tokio he could not find work, was forced to steal in order to live, and when he had accumulated some money he went to Liverpool. He lived in Liverpool about a year where he existed by theft the same as in Japan. In March, 1902, he left Liverpool for New Orleans. When in America, he said, he did not lose heart because he knew many friends, *and they had to help him*, he said. And he uttered these words with the saturnine confidence of the established 'Black Hand.' ”

## CHAPTER IX

### THE SOCIETY

“ ‘How could you manage in so many different places without knowing the language?’ I inquired, not quite knowing the ramifications of the Mafia.

“ ‘I found Italians everywhere, and would get directions from them until I found some *friends*.’ He spoke the last word significantly.

“ ‘Did you understand English then?’

“ ‘Did not even dream of it.’

“ ‘Have you worked while you have been in America?’

“ ‘Never,’ grinned Uncle Vincent. ‘Neither do I expect to work. If I knew the man who invented work, and met him, I would kill him.’

“ ‘What do you do to live?’

“ ‘You are too young to know certain things,’ he explained with a veiled glance. ‘When you have become well interested in the affairs of our

society you will know *how to live without work.*'

" 'Then you belong to some society which gives you money?' I inquired, feigning stupidity.

" 'Yes, but not like *your* societies. When you leave your societies and join ours you will feel better.'

" 'And what is the price of initiation?'

" 'Nothing.'

" 'How will I be admitted then?'

" 'We must try you with a courageous deed requiring secrecy.'

" 'And what is this society of yours called?' I asked.

" 'It has no name.'

" 'Is it a mutual aid society?'

" 'No.'

" 'Where are its headquarters?'

" 'In all parts of the world.'

" 'In Italy?'

" 'Yes, in Italy.'

" 'Then it must be the Masons?'

" 'What, the Masons? Pooh-pooh! my friend. *Ours* is a society that *never ends* and is bigger than the Masons.'

" 'And when will you allow me to enter?'

" 'I must school you first,' he grumbled, eyeing

me suspiciously. 'And when you become known to the heads, and are respected, then we will christen you.'

" 'You will christen me?' I exclaimed.

" 'Yes.'

" 'How is that? I have already been baptized in the Roman Catholic religion, and now you would baptize me again?'

" 'Certainly!' he grinned. 'But it is not a matter of religion. You are christened into the society. We give you a title that you will bear in secret, a title that will make you obeyed and respected in all parts of the world.'

" 'I am curious to attend a meeting of your society.'

" 'In time you will attend; but first, I would have to ask the superiors.'

" 'At this moment I was called by Caterina and the discussion ended. I had absorbed enough to surmise about the vast, hidden power of the 'Black-Hand' menace reaching as it does with arms steeped in gore all around the globe.'

## CHAPTER X

### MEETING THE ARCH-BANDIT

"AT the end of January the Canadian five-dollar notes were completed and cut the size of the genuine. After being counted they amounted to seventeen thousand five hundred and forty dollars. They were put in an empty macaroni box and was nailed up and put away for Cecala, who was to have them exchanged for good money to various people whom he knew.

"On February 1st, 1909, not having received any word from New York, Giglio left and went to Cina's house to inquire the cause of the long silence. Next day Giglio returned, accompanied by Cecala and Cina, and fixed the press to print the two-dollar notes, check letter A, and plate number 1111. Having prepared the press Cecala and I fixed some green ink, but after several attempts to imitate the genuine Cecala de-

cided we could not do it. That night Cecala gave me five dollars and told me that on February 4 I was to go to New York. I was to go to his house and there talk with a party who was capable of preparing the ink. Then admonishing me not to leave until Cina called for me with a carriage, Cecala left with Cina and Giglio.

“On February 4, about eight in the morning, Cina came to the stone house with Bernardo, the former to accompany me to the station and the latter to remain with Uncle Vincent and Caterina. I arrived in New York at noontime and went directly to Cecala’s home at No. 92 East Fourth Street, where I found his wife who gave me a piece of paper after making sure of my identity.

“‘My husband is waiting at the address written on the piece of paper,’ she said. ‘Ask for him in the bank on the ground floor.’

“The piece of paper contained this address: ‘630 East One Hundred and Thirty-Eighth Street.’

“Arriving at One Hundred and Thirty-Eighth Street I found the house I was seeking and asked for Cecala. A well-dressed man told me



that Cecala would not return until two o'clock. It was then half after one and the man told me to return in a half hour. In the meantime I walked over toward the L station thinking I might meet Cecala. I returned to the address written on the paper after walking around for about forty minutes without seeing Cecala. I was told to take a seat and the well-dressed man telephoned to Cecala, who arrived in a few minutes and invited me upstairs with him. I went up to a room on the second floor and there met two men.

"Cecala introduced me to one of the men who was tall, wrapped up in a shawl of brown color, of oval face and high forehead. He had dark eyes, an aquiline nose, dark hair, and dark mustache. He appeared to be about forty years old. As he was walking about the room I noticed particularly that this man had one arm outside the shawl and the other hidden beneath the wrap. Could he be hiding a weapon? The other man remained seated in a chair. He was about thirty or thirty-five years old, of medium build with dark curly hair, sallow complexion. His nose was a little flattened, he had a brown mustache, brown eyes, and wore a cap 'A la

Sicilian.' Cecala introduced the first man as Mr. Morello and the second as 'Michele, the Calabrian.'

"Morello bade me make myself comfortable. Then he gave me a piercing glance and said slowly:

" 'How is it, professor, that you cannot succeed in reaching a color like the green on the two-dollar notes?'

" 'I told Mr. Cecala from the beginning that this was not in my line of work,' I replied.

" 'How is it that a printer like you don't know how to mix inks?'

" 'I am experienced in composing and printing books, not in printing money.'

" 'Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!' ejaculated the bandit comprehendingly. 'So, if you do not know how to mix the ink the bills cannot be printed?'

" 'Certainly not.'

" 'Well, we will find a man who knows how to prepare the inks, and I advise you to do the printing carefully so that the money can be easily exchanged. Save the Canadian notes because they are expensive to exchange. And just now we are without money and cannot incur extra expenses.'

“‘I would rather leave this work and return to New York,’ I ventured.

“‘You are crazy,’ yelled Cecala, who was still present. ‘Now that we are at it we must complete it. If things go right, we will all be rich; but don’t think of betraying us because *your life would be lost* if you did. You must never tell any one what you are doing at the peril of losing your life. If you get into danger because of the secret we will save you.’

“Morello eyed me sarcastically. He shot a menacing side-glance at me and uttered this warning in a low voice: ‘Suppose you are arrested. Well, you must never tell that you know us, because we, remaining on the outside, can help you at the cost of losing our property. I advise you to be faithful to us. Remember, you are dealing with gentlemen.’

“‘I understand that,’ I said, feigning respect, ‘but I am in great danger alone in the woods with the woman, and if I am taken by surprise I am ruined.’

“‘How? Are you alone? Where is Uncle Vincent? Is he not there?’

“‘Yes.’

“‘He alone is enough to keep any one away

from the house. Soon there will be other people to help you, and keep you company, and bring arms and ammunition. The first stranger that is suspected will be killed and buried in the woods.'

"Morello spoke this with a saturnine air of unconcern as if he had been discussing a smoke or a glass of wine. To this man murder was merely an incident to his trade.

"The arch-bandit now turned to Cecala, saying:

"'It would be well to ask Milone (Antonio B.), and see if he is able to make the green tint.' Milone is the man who made the plates.

"'Who cares to go to Two Hundred and Thirty-Ninth Street, in the Bronx, at this hour?' replied Cecala in disgusted protest. 'It can be done to-morrow.'

"'No. It is better that we send Nick (Sylvester) to-night,' said Morello with an air of finality that booked no dispute.

"'Do what you think, Piddu.<sup>1</sup> Suppose we arrange to send Don Antonio?'

"'Do not let him leave us, though.'

<sup>1</sup> Piddu is the Sicilian diminutive for Giuseppe, the Christian name of Morello.

“‘I know, and if he has to leave, I will accompany him,’ concluded Cecala almost in a whisper.

“Cecala now invited me out with him, asked me where did I want to sleep, and when I told him at my aunt’s, he offered to accompany me there.

“As we were about to leave the place Morello turned to Cecala and I overheard him say:

“‘Nino, I wish you would not have the professor come here any more. You know there are detectives following me and as soon as they see a suspicious face they arrest him. The other night, as you know, they arrested father and son while they were going down the stairs.’

“‘I know it,’ replied Cecala, ‘but what are your suspicions about Don Antonio?’

“‘Well—er—sometimes you can’t tell.’

“The ‘Black-Hand’ chief dropped into a brief reverie. Maybe he had a vague vision of the fate that was to befall him. The other man present, Michele, the Calabrian, had not uttered a single word during the entire conversation.

“After we had left the house Cecala turned to me and said with bated breath:

“‘The man you saw with one hand is Giuseppe



Morello, the same who was implicated in the barrel murder.'

"I did not reply because I did not know of Morello; neither did I know of the barrel murder. I only thought that he really had one arm because I did not see the other. From time to time Morello had been snuffing tobacco.

" 'I want you to know all my friends so that you can have an idea with whom you are dealing, and don't think they are poor, but all landlords,' now confided Cecala. 'Morello is President of the Corleone Society (Ignatz Florio) and has in his power four buildings amounting to one hundred thousand dollars. The other man you met the last time, Pecoraro, is the proprietor of a large wine deposit, and he has more property. Giglio and Cina are owners of the estates that you saw. I am poor because I did not know how to profit. My profession is that of barber. I had a splendid shop, but the business was poor and I sold it. Two weeks after I sold the barber shop I got in with Morello and opened a grocery store in Mott Street. But after two years I was forced into bankruptcy because all the goods were sold on credit and I was not paid. Then I opened up two gambling



houses, one in Mott Street and the other in Elizabeth Street. I was getting along well while I fed the police. When I did not want to give them any more they began to go against me and forced me to close up.'

"At the moment I could not understand why it should have been necessary to 'feed' the police, as he said, not being acquainted with the methods here."

## CHAPTER XI

### THE BLACK-HANDER'S POLICE PROTECTION

“‘CERTAINLY,’ Cecala said. ‘In America *everything is prohibited; but if you pay the police or detectives they will leave you in peace.* In this land money counts, so that if *you kill any one and have money you will get out of it.* Morello knows how much money he has given to detectives to get out free out of three or four cases in which he was implicated. Even now he is supposed to be watched by the police who do not care to watch him because they know that they will receive their bit. The government always holds him under suspicion as the head of the Black-Handers. When anything happens Morello is always in danger of arrest, but the same policeman he feeds tips him off and so Morello goes into hiding. The police then feign to raid his place, but, of course, the man wanted is never there. Now then, my dear Don Antonio,

that's the way things are done in this country. During the last three years I am getting along well in my line: that is, I am the head of a band of incendiaries and earn a little money now and then.'

"Cecala was disclosing to me a phase of the under-world life of crime and horror of which I knew nothing at the time.

" 'And what do you do to earn this money? Do you take the objects that you find in the burned houses?' I inquired.

" 'No,' sneered Cecala with contempt. 'I set fire to the houses to defraud the insurance companies!'

"He said this with the pride of a professional expert.

" 'And how do you do it?' I inquired, curious to learn his ways.

" 'Well, you own a store and have insured it against fire. You have paid up the insurance and do not wish to pay any more, but you want to realize on the money already paid in. You will send for me to set a fire. In my manner I will develop a fire in an instant. When the insurance company pays you the money you pay me a percentage.'

“Then perhaps you were the one who set the big fire in Mulberry Street where so many poor people were burned?”

“‘No!’ came the quick response. ‘I do not set fire to make accidents happen. That fire was engineered by a Neapolitan band that were in accord with the proprietor of the dry goods store underneath. They did not work it right because they started the fire from the side of the store and afterwards put explosives on the stairs so that no trace would be left. If I had had that job there would have been no trace to tell the story, and the damage would have been done from the store door. There would not have been so many accidents and the families would have had time to run into the yard.’

“‘How can you guarantee all this? And what explosive matter do you use to start a fire?’ I inquired.

“‘Glycerine,’ mumbled the bandit. ‘I mix it with other matters. It does not smell and leaves no trace of the fire.’

“‘And do you go alone on these jobs?’

“‘No. You always need three or four men. I direct them and they bring the material. I pay each man five dollars a night.’

“‘And these helpers, do they make much money?’

“‘Quite some—now and then. They risk their hides. But it is not steady work, you know; only on occasions.’

“The train arrived at the station and Cecala indicated a seat separate from him so as not to invite suspicion. At Houston Street he signalled for me to get off, and when in the street he asked me where my aunt lived. When I told him in Bleeker Street he said: ‘I will accompany you. Let us go to a drug store near by first. I must ask something.’

“We went to Spring Street and entered a drug store with a sign over the door spelling the name of ‘Antonio Mocito.’ Cecala asked a boy in the store where the druggist might be and the boy replied that he was out. Cecala told the boy to inform the druggist that he, Cecala, had been there and to prepare ‘that matter.’

“‘I put this druggist right!’ boasted Cecala in a low voice. ‘He had a drug store and did a little business. I suggested to him that he insure the store against fire. After he had paid up for a little while, I put fire to it and the company paid him three thousand dollars with which

he put up this new store. So you see, he was saved!

"On the way to my aunt's house Cecala made many suggestions to me warning me that I was to tell my aunt nothing. He told me to meet him at his home at six o'clock the next morning. This was at 6 P. M.

"I leave it to the reader's imagination to picture the condition of mind I was in after learning of the kind of 'gentlemen' I was obliged to deal with. I had been caught in a trap set by a band of incendiaries and Black-Handers enjoying police protection. What good would it have done me to go to the police about it? What could anybody in my position do under the circumstances? I thought it would be better to keep silent and save my life until I had occasion to denounce the gang. I was secretly awaiting this opportunity without their knowledge. Then, again, how could I proceed against them without witnesses?

"The thought that afflicted me with most concern was the fate of the lady. I realized that her consent to my desire had caused her to be mixed up with bad people. I also realized that if we were discovered by the police, Caterina and



I would be the only ones to suffer because we were alone and without any help from any one and penniless.

"I summoned all the courage I could muster. I always appeared to be contented with the orders that were given me, and I executed them without finding the least objection.

"I was daily afflicted by the life I was leading, and was continually disturbed in my mind because I saw that I had not one penny, and when I asked for money I was bluntly refused. It also worried me to think that my family believed I was working and making money without sending any home. Time and again I planned to run away, but how? Where would I go? I would have to abandon all my things and be left out in the street. And who would help me? A penniless stranger.

"On the morning of February 5, 1909, it was snowing and very cold when I went to the home of Cecala at the appointed hour. He invited me to sit down and his wife served me with coffee. I saw his five children, quite sympathetic children, three girls and two boys. In looking at them I was seized by remorse to think that these

innocent children as the offspring of a criminal would probably be converted into criminals also in time. Cecala told me brusquely that we would have to leave on the ten o'clock train in spite of the snow.

“‘When we arrive at Highland there will be no one about the station, and we will arouse no suspicion,’ explained Cecala.

“‘Have you found the man to prepare the ink?’ I asked.

“‘Yes. He is coming with us. Here is a dollar. Go to your aunt and meet us at the Grand Central Station. I am going to Don Piddu’s (Morello’s) to get other inks that were bought last night. But now that I think about it, meet me at the Brooklyn Bridge and you will buy some green ink, because they would not sell it to me. Say you are a printer and refer them to the shop where you were working.’

“‘And if they object, what shall I reply?’

“‘I will understand.’

“‘And what kind of ink is it necessary to buy?’

“‘The kind we need are marked in the catalogue.’

“‘And who has marked them?’

“‘A professor who has done other work for me and is very practical at his work. If necessary, he will come and work together with you.’

“Cecala took me to a store on Rose Street where he employed sign language to explain the kind of ink he wanted. A young lady asked questions in English which I could not answer. Cecala then interrupted and tried to act as interpreter. I was confused for a moment. Then I took out a bill head with my name on it which I had used while I acted as solicitor for work in an Italian printing shop in Mott Street. The young lady read it, and after about twenty minutes she returned, giving me three cans of ink and the bill, which Cecala paid.

“Cecala now directed me to go to my aunt’s place before meeting him at the Grand Central Station in time for the ten o’clock train. There I met the man who was to assist me in printing the counterfeit bills. The reader may now appreciate the sagacity of Cecala in leaving me after coming out of the ink store. It gave him the advantage to meet the mysterious man who was to help in the mixing of the inks, and it also gave him a chance to throw anybody off the trail if there were detectives following.

“At the Grand Central Station we met the man with the camera. Cecala bought three tickets for Poughkeepsie. Arriving there we found Cina waiting for us with a closed carriage. He drove to another station and then to a ferry where we went across the river to Highland and from there to the clandestine factory. Supper was waiting for us there, and we rested till the next morning to start work. During the evening, Cecala, Cina, Uncle Vincent and the other man played cards while Bernardo and I chopped wood for the stove.

“On the morning of February 6, 1909, we got the press ready. The man whose name I had not yet been given mixed the ink. After taking some proofs the right shade of green was developed. The unnamed man then explained to me that by mixing black and yellow I would obtain an olive green, and by mixing this color with the clear green in the cans which were brought up from New York, the right shade of green, just like the genuine money color, would be obtained. He explained this so that I could mix up more in case the ink he had mixed would not be sufficient to print the ten thousand sheets of the two-dollar bills, which would make twenty thousand

dollars in counterfeit money. Then he measured the genuine note and marked where the seal was to be printed. He also prepared the blue shade of ink for this impression. He advised me to pay close attention to the black.

"We were alone in the room while he was instructing me, and I told him that I had little faith in Cecala and his companions because they did not give me any money, and made me remain without a penny after having worked a long time. He told me that I ought to be contented, for I was dealing with gentlemen. In olden times, he said, men in that line of work, when the work had been done, would *assassinate* the one doing the very work I was doing. *The man was murdered*, he explained to me, *so that the counterfeiters would not be discovered* and the secret revealed to the police.

"Is there any danger of my being assassinated after completing this work?" I asked.

"No," he said, "there is no danger. You are dealing with good people."

"After he was through with his work he wanted to see how the printing progressed and how many an hour were struck off. He was try-



ing to figure whether the work could be completed in fifteen days.

“We worked at the press until about 4 P. M., when there were over three thousand sheets printed on one side. This progress seemed to satisfy the photographer and ink mixer. At about 4:30 P. M., Cina, Cecala and Bernardo went away with the stranger, leaving Uncle Vincent behind with me. Before leaving, Cecala said that Giglio would come next morning to help and, if necessary, Bernardo would return also. Cecala said that when the green side of the printing was completed, and I saw that a change in the ink was necessary, I was to leave the plant and meet him in New York. Hereupon Uncle Vincent declared that it was necessary to have Bernardo present in order that some one could be watching outside the stone house and keep an eye out for strangers. Cecala consented, and Bernardo remained with us to do sentinel duty. Next morning Giglio came, and he and Uncle Vincent and myself worked on without interruption. Bernardo, armed with a revolver and a rifle, remained on the outside, having received orders from Uncle Vincent to fire



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a shot into the air in the event of strangers appearing. This was to be the signal for us.

"On February 9, 1909, the press was ready for the seal. In the morning Cina handed me a note from Cecala and a letter from my aunt. Cecala's note requested me to remain in the house and not come to New York if there was no urgent need of it. My aunt's note informed me that my brother was about to be operated upon. I lost no time getting into my street clothes. I prevailed on Cina to show me the way to the station, where I boarded a train for New York.

"My first move was to see Cecala and get some money from him, but I did not find him at his home. Then I went to Morello's home in One Hundred and Thirty-eighth Street. Mrs. Morello told me that her husband was not at home, nor did she seem to know where Cecala could be found. I hurried to my brother's house, got there just as he was being removed in an ambulance to the Italian Hospital in Houston Street. I was without a penny and felt very miserable to think that I could not help at this moment.

"After going with my brother to the hospital I went to Cecala's house. He seemed much sur-

prised that I should have come to New York without first consulting him. However, when I explained the circumstances, Cecala approved of my action, but said that he had no money, only two dollars for the return fare. He assured me, though, that he would see to it that my brother was put in a private ward. This would be an easy matter, Cecala said, because he was well acquainted with several of the doctors at the Italian Hospital. He advised me to leave for the plant as soon as possible, saying that he had many requests for the counterfeit money and the customers were waiting for him to fill the orders.

"I was always obedient to the orders of the gang, and so after going to my brother's house and trying to console his wife by assuring her that I had arranged to have a private room for him at the hospital, I left for Highland on the 11:40 P. M. train. It was very cold when I arrived at the little station on the Hudson, and I was almost frozen stiff trying to find Cina's house in the darkness. I stopped at Cina's house until the next morning when I was taken in his wagon to the stone house."

## CHAPTER XII

### A KNOCK AT THE DOOR AT 2 A. M.

"ABOUT two o'clock on the night of February 12, 1909, there was a knock at the door of the stone house. Uncle Vincent jumped out of bed and grabbed his rifle. Uncle was quite pale. Bernardo and Giglio armed themselves with revolvers. I noticed they were trembling. I went down to the door without a light and asked:

" 'Who is it?'

" 'We,' replied a feminine voice.

" 'Who are you?'

" 'Open the door, professor.'

"Hereupon Uncle Vincent hurried downstairs and said:

" 'Ignazio has come.'

"Bernardo and Giglio lighted a lamp and opened the door. A well dressed man wearing a fur overcoat and a fur cap, a man about thirty years old, ran toward Uncle Vincent and embraced him, kissing him on the cheeks.

“Following Ignazio (Lupo), came Cecala, Sylvester, Cina and an elderly man who had gray hair and moustache, a man of more than fifty years old, elegantly dressed, and wearing a gold watch and chain and a large diamond ring. After Cecala had introduced me to Ignazio Lupo and the elderly man, named Uncle Salvatore, they requested Caterina to get up and prepare a meal, as the early morning visitors were hungry and had brought meat and wine. The new arrivals were very courteous to Caterina, especially Lupo, who appeared to be a man of great politeness.

“Lupo talked some with Caterina and asked her if she liked the place, to which Caterina answered that it was cold in the house and that she suffered from hunger. Lupo assured her that he would see that we were provided for amply hereafter, and wrote down on a piece of paper what Caterina suggested in the way of food-stuffs. Lupo then instructed Sylvester to take the note down to New York to Mrs. Lupo, who would have the goods shipped up to Highland. We never saw the goods, though!

“While Caterina was frying about six pounds of meat, Cecala and Cina unloaded two large

grips and several bundles. Lupo opened the valise and removed two repeating rifles, two revolvers and four boxes of cartridges. There were about one thousand rounds of ammunition. Lupo then instructed all the gang in the use of the rifles and the revolvers, which, he said, would shoot about fifteen shots a minute. All present complimented Lupo on his foresight, declaring that the weapons were just the thing. After a little more talk about the arms every one sat down to eat, except I and Caterina. There were no chairs left for us. We acted as waiters, serving the 'lords' of the gang!

"They were eating and drinking joyfully when Uncle Vincent turned to Lupo and said:

" 'What news are you bringing, Ignazio?'

" 'You all know the news. Besides, Petrosino<sup>1</sup> has gone to Italy.'

" 'If he went to Italy, he is as good as dead,' said Uncle Vincent.

" 'I hope they get him,' was the pious wish of Cina.

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino of the Italian Detective Bureau, attached to the New York Police Department, was murdered in Palermo, Sicily, while on a mission for the Police Department then under the guidance of Commissioner Theodore Bingham. Petrosino had been an implacable foe of the Lupo-Morello gang. His murder has never been explained to the public.



“‘He has ruined many of us,’ went on Lupo. ‘It is enough to say that he had himself locked up in the Tombs Prison to interrogate the suspects and uncover crimes.’

“‘Many a mother’s child he has ruined,’ said Uncle Salvatore (Palermo), ‘and how many are still crying!’

“‘What is more,’ continued Lupo, ‘I have given Michele, the Calabrian, his fare to —— to go and see his family, which was stricken by the earthquake.’

“‘You have done well,’ broke in Cecala, winking an evil eye and making a peculiar motion. Doubtless this was a secret sign. He lifted his glass and shouted: ‘Let’s drink our own health and to hell with that Carogna!’<sup>1</sup>

“The ‘table talk’ now turned on other things, such as the exploding of bombs by Sylvester, aided by his son and the step-brother of Morello. It appeared that they had run away after the bomb had been hurled when they were caught and brought before the judge, where they pleaded innocence and so escaped the clutches of

<sup>1</sup> Carogna in the Sicilian dialect means a putrid, dead animal. Among the Sicilian criminals the word is used to designate anybody that brings harm to any gang of criminals.



the law. There was some talk of Lupo's business failure for a matter of about \$100,000; and mention was also made of the failure of a bank in Elizabeth Street, which was controlled by Uncle Vincent.

"In spite of his business reverses Lupo was in good humor and sang several songs for the company with the bravado of the born bandit. By and by the lusty gang went to bed, occupying every bed in the house. Caterina and I remained awake. At daylight, Cina, Sylvester and Giglio left. The others remained to direct and help in the work.

"After three days of directing the work at the stone house, and trying out the guns in the woods together with Uncle Salvatore, Lupo and the latter departed. Salvatore remarking that he was going to make his home at Cina's house. Their departure left Uncle Vincent, Giglio, Bernardo and myself to do the work.

"About the twenty-third or the twenty-fourth of February, I am not certain which, I gave to Cina and Cecala the completed work on the two-dollar notes, that is: twenty thousand and four hundred dollars in counterfeit money. The bills were put up in packages of one hundred and

bundled into a dress suit case. Then they started to plan the route for distributing the bad money. Cecala said that he preferred to go to Philadelphia first; then Baltimore, where he had many friends; from Baltimore they would cover Pittsburgh, Buffalo and Chicago. The counterfeit money, after being placed at each of the centers, was to be placed in circulation on a given day, so that the notes would appear simultaneously in all the cities.

"They made me take the plates off the press and hide them under a plank in the floor together with some ink. Every piece of paper with any printing on was burned. Before departing they assured Caterina and I that they would return in a week and give us some good money; also, they would then tell me whether to continue or suspend the work.

"A very lonesome week in the dreary old stone house followed. On the first Sunday in March, 1909, Cina's brother, Peppino, bobbed up. He had come to take me to Cina's house where certain people from New York wanted to talk with me. He took a boxful of the Canadian five-dollar counterfeit bills. The visitors were to determine whether the Canadian money was good

enough to sell or whether it was to be burned up, so he explained.

"Upon hearing this I had a presentiment that the day of my being murdered had arrived. Without saying a word to Peppino and Cina, I called Caterina aside and told her my fears. I showed her how to use the rifle.

" 'Caterina,' I said, 'in case I do not return and people come to you with any excuse, no matter what, to get you, it is a sure sign that they have assassinated me. Then shoot whoever comes after you, or they will murder you!'

"The poor woman began to cry, and I had difficulty in composing her. Unnoticed by Peppino I managed to steal Uncle Vincent's revolver, and put it into my pocket."

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE BLACK-HANDERS IN SESSION

"UPON entering the house, which was close by Cina's farmhouse, I saw a table in a room on the ground floor and around this table were seated the following bandits: Ignazio Lupo, Giuseppe Morello, Antonio Cecala, Uncle Salvatore (Giuseppe Palermo), Uncle Vincent, Vincenzo Giglio, Bernardo Perrone, Nicola Sylvester, besides a man from Brooklyn whom the gang called Domenico and who was a baker, and five other men whose names I did not know. Cina was not there, being occupied with his family, where a birth was expected momentarily.

"As I stepped in no one motioned to recognize me nor was my greeting returned. Mechanically I took a seat. After about ten minutes of sinister silence and ill-boding glances, Cina broke the strain as he came rushing in with Peppino, his brother, both of them laughing and shouting like madmen.

“‘A boy! ‘A boy!’ they yelled.

“Cina received the congratulations of the gang. Silence once more haunted the room. Then Lupo turned to me abruptly and said:

“‘Don Antonio, your work is worthless. It is a rotten job; so much so that none of it could be sold. Cina and Cecala have risked their lives in trying to sell it. However, they have sold some four thousand dollars of the counterfeit money, taking in, all in all, about one thousand dollars in genuine money. They have expended about two hundred dollars on their trip to different cities distributing our product. Therefore, there remains about eight hundred dollars, which will be divided among the ones that have advanced the first money. If you had turned out a good job we could have taken in more by selling it all. As it is about seven or eight thousand dollars have been made for the stove.

“‘The Canadian money is worthless and must be burned. It cannot be put on the market. But this is no fault of yours, in this instance. It is the fault of the one who made the plates.

“‘Now you watch how the money is divided. *If there is any left*, you get it. These men present will not accept a penny of the remainder

until those who advanced the money have been settled with.'

" 'As my work did not turn out well,' I replied to Lupo, 'give me only enough to return to New York.'

" 'No,' broke in Morello, decisively. 'We don't know yet whether you may return to New York or whether you are to continue the work in company with another man.'

" 'You want money?' asked Lupo. 'Who will give it to you? I have spent two hundred dollars and now will take that amount. There will then be but six hundred dollars to be divided.'

" 'Don't do things all your own way, Ignazio,' Morello warned in his husky voice. 'Let us deliberate and argue this thing out. There are eight hundred dollars. You have spent two hundred dollars. You get seventy-five dollars now. I have spent fifty dollars and will take it now, as I need it very much, as you know. Fifty dollars we will give to Cina, twenty dollars to Don Antonio, ten to Uncle Salvatore and ten more to Uncle Vincent, five to Giglio and five to Bernardo; what is left is needed for the continuation of the work with the other plates.'

" 'And the man who made the plates, don't



you want to give him anything?' inquired Cecala.

" 'Yes,' was the reply in chorus.

" 'Well,' turning to me, 'take these twenty dollars,' said Morello, 'and return to the house. Await there the decision whether you are to return to New York or not.'

"I accepted the money and tucked it into my pocket. Then I was driven to the stone house in a carriage accompanied by Cina's brother Peppino.

"During this session with the gang some of them got busy and started to burn up the Canadian five-dollar notes, and a portion of the two-dollar American notes. These were the notes returned as worthless by the gang. While throwing the notes into the stove Uncle Salvatore and Peppino exclaimed from time to time:

" 'What a shame. They might all have been sold.'

"Once more at the stone house I explained to Caterina what had happened. I told her that they had given me the twenty dollars and that I was going to go to New York and not return; of course she was to come along with me. But after thinking it over we resolved that our ap-

pearance was so miserable that we had better remain a while longer. There was also the ever-present danger that if we ran away from this gang we would be murdered. We abandoned the idea, therefore, and stayed at the stone house awaiting the orders of the gang.

"We were not kept waiting long. Next morning, Salvatore Cina came to the house in a very happy mood. He told me that I could not return to New York because the work was to be continued with other and better plates for the two-dollar notes. The five-dollar notes were to be continued, and we were to print until five million dollars had been struck off the press. This amount, he said, would make us all rich. Then the work was to cease. He told me that it had been decided to buy a horse and carriage for the exclusive use of the stone house. I was to go to New York and meet Cecala who would introduce me to the man who was to direct the work from now on. I was to tell Cina the day I intended going to New York.

"After arranging that Giglio and Bernardo were to remain with Caterina, while I was in New York and Uncle Vincent went to New-

burgh on business, I said that I would be ready for my trip in two days. Then Cina left me after he had warned me not to tell any of the secrets of the place, explaining how hard it was for the police to discover the plant. He declared I must be happy in the thought of future wealth.

"On March 7, 1909, Cina returned to the stone house with a carriage, bringing Giglio and Bernardo to keep Caterina company. He drove me to the Highland station, and I got aboard the 11 A. M. train for New York. Arriving at the Grand Central station I was met by Cecala, who took me to a house at No. 5 Jones Street. Not finding the party he was seeking there, he told me to go to my aunt's house and return to the Jones Street address at eight o'clock that evening and ask for Don Peppe.

"That same evening at the appointed hour I went to the Jones Street house and inquired in a grocery store on the street floor for Don Peppe. A woman indicated to me the door where I knocked. A bald-headed man, about forty-five years old, with a nice light brown moustache opened the door.

"Cecala was there seated in a chair. He introduced me to the man who opened the door

saying that he was Giuseppe Calichio, a lithograph engraver, alias Don Peppe. Cecala turned to Calichio and said:

“‘Don Peppe, we are in need of your work. This man (indicating me) is a printer, but he is not capable of doing the work that we require. You must go with him and continue this work. It is already started and everything will go well. When we have printed two or three million dollars’ worth we will stop. We are in luck.’

“‘Unless we are discovered by the police,’ replied Calichio.

“‘Have no such fear,’ said Cecala. ‘The place where the work is done is very secure. No one would ever suspect that such a thing is going there.’

“‘Listen, Cecala,’ said Calichio. ‘If things happen as they did when I did work for you before, then I refuse to go. I do not care to work and risk my life and then get nothing for it.’

“‘No, no,’ said Cecala. ‘You know that that work did not turn out at all well.’

“‘I know nothing other than that you caused me to sell my little printing shop, and I am in terrible condition financially even now as a result of it. If you want me to do the work you

speak about in company with brother Comito here, you must give me twenty dollars a week and board. I have a family in Italy to look after, don't forget. As long as you pay me what I want I am ready to work for you; but I must be paid in advance. The first week that you fail to pay me in advance I will cease to work and come home. And what is more, my dear Cecala, I want good eating and must have wine every day; as you know there is not a day that goes by without my drinking wine that I do not get a headache. The wine gives me strength and health.'

"Cecala's answer to this was characteristic:

"'Don Peppe, I will do all that is possible to get you twenty dollars a week, but I must first talk with the others, my friends, as you know that I am not alone in this undertaking. As to the eating, you will have all that you want and there will be wine. I will have a barrel of it shipped to Highland, direct to Cina, who will see that you get some when you want it.'

"'Who is this Cina?' asked Calichio, suspiciously.

"'He is my godfather, whom you will know, when you are in Highland,' said Cecala.



“‘Perhaps he is that farmer whom I saw in Don Piddu’s (Morello’s) house last year?’

“‘Precisely,’ said Cecala.

“‘He continued: ‘I will bring the first twenty dollars to-morrow. To-morrow night you will leave with Comito?’

“‘All right. But first, I must see the plates and examine them to see whether they are good. If I am to do this work, it must be done perfectly. You know that I do not do things by halves. I must see whether the plates need retouching. I will bring my tools. If I am unable to use them for this work then we will buy some before leaving the city.’

“‘Have no doubt,’ continued Cecala. ‘I will come to-morrow morning and show the plates to you, and you can take them with you.’

“‘Come to-morrow about 10 A. M. with Comito, and not before ten, because I expect a person on some *personal* business and do not want him to see you,’ counselled Calichio.

“‘During all this talk I did not say a word. On my way with Cecala to my aunt’s house in Bleecker Street Cecala remarked:

“‘Don Antonio, that man Calichio is the professor for the job. In Italy he has printed for



aristocratic families, who were in hard luck. He printed for these aristocrats about three million dollars in fifty, one-hundred, five-hundred and one-thousand lire notes. *This money was worked off in this country on people who were going to Italy on trips.* Don Peppe is capable of transferring to lithographic stones the engraving on bank notes and then transfer the engraving from the lithographic stones on to zinc plates, and in this way perfect the plates that are necessary for our business.'

"'Is that how our plates were made?' I inquired.

"'No. Ours were made by photography and a lot of preparations are necessary by that method. It is enough to say that I have spent over a hundred dollars up-to-date for chemicals.'

"Suddenly Cecala turned on me a whispered: 'Don Antonio, what have you told your aunt?'

"'Nothing—why?'

"'Did she ask where you are working?'

"'No. She knows that I am working in Philadelphia.'

"'Good! If she asks with whom you are working in Philadelphia say that your employer

is a priest, and his name is Bonaventure (—————)'

"‘Very well,’ I replied. ‘My aunt is not interested whether I am working with a priest or with a monk. I have told her that I was employed in a printing shop, nothing else.’

"‘Good! You are an intelligent man, and that is why I and all my friends like you Calabrians, because you are secretive and are never corrupted. I knew a Calabrian who was arrested with counterfeit notes on him, once, and the policemen made him all kinds of promises and even punched him, in their effort to learn from him who had given him the counterfeit money to exchange; but he never told a word. He never squealed.’

"I made no reply; only shook Cecala’s hand and went to my aunt’s.

"The next morning, I forget whether it was the 9th or the 10th of March, I went at the given hour to Calichio’s house, where I found Cecala examining the zinc plates for the two-dollar American notes, of the check letter C, plate number 1110.

"Calichio carefully examined the plates with a magnifying glass. He explained to us that

the acids that were used for washing the plates were too strong and had destroyed some fine lines and that it would be necessary to retouch the plates and so raise the missing lines. He would do it himself, Calichio said, if the proper tools were brought to him. Cecala quickly answered that the tools would be bought immediately and that we were to prepare to leave for Highland that night. We then went to a hardware store on the Bowery, and Calichio selected some chisels and other tools, for which Cecala paid. As soon as we were out of the store Cecala gave Calichio his first twenty dollars in advance. Turning to me, Cecala said:

“‘Don Antonio, Don Peppe and I are going to buy some chemicals. You can go away and be at Jones Street to-night at 10 P. M. ready to leave. Buy what you need, because you will not return to New York until the work is completed.’

“I went to a store and bought a pair of shoes for myself and a pair for Caterina. I also bought some little delicacies of food for her.

“That night the three of us left on the 11 P. M. train for Highland. Arriving there at 2 in the morning, we were met at the station by

Peppino Cina with a carriage. He told us that we must go directly to the stone house and not stop at Cina's farm because a strange face might arouse suspicion among the neighbors. We did not work that day. We took a much-needed rest."

## CHAPTER XIV

### PRINTING THE BAD MONEY

"CALICHIO was up at an early hour and set to work retouching the two-dollar American note plates. He fixed the plates on wood blocks, made the press ready and got the right impression, prepared the ink and struck off proofs on several kinds of paper to see the effect of the ink and get the correct shade. He also prepared some chemicals with which to dampen the paper and give a darker shade. Having succeeded in getting the right shade of green Calichio explained that the color was the same as on the genuine notes and that all they needed now was the paper.

"Cecala then said he would leave immediately and have the paper shipped forthwith. Turning to me Cecala gave instructions for me to be busy only at feeding the press. Don Peppe were to direct the job. I to obey the latter in every de-

tail. Cecala then took the proofs and put them in his pocket, saying that he would show them to Ignazio and Don Piddu (Lupo and Morello) and mark the difference between this and the first job, which was mine.

“Two days later Nick Sylvester came and brought with him a suit-case full of paper which he gave to Calichio saying:

“‘To-morrow Ignazio will come to see how the work is going along. In the meantime you can proceed with the work and print. I will remain to help you.’

“When Lupo arrived the next morning in company with Cecala and Cina they all came up to the work room. After examining the work they praised Calichio, telling him that they ought to give him a gold medal. As for me, I was deserved of a dirty, leather medal, the bandits hinted.

“Turning to me Lupo said, ‘This homely Calabrian doesn’t even deserve to be looked at. The work he did should have been *burned on his head*.’

“I did not reply, but played the simpleton.

“After examining the work Lupo turned to Uncle Vincent and said:

“‘Uncle Vic—guess what’s happened?’



“‘What?’

“‘Petrosino was killed in Italy.’

“‘Honestly?’

“‘Honestly. The papers are talking about it.’

“‘I said it,’ continued Uncle Vincent, ‘that if Petrosino went to Italy they would kill him.’

“‘Who was the hero? He deserves a medal,’ said Cecala.

“‘And where have they killed him?’ continued Uncle Vincent.

“‘In Palermo.’

“‘Then it means that it was *well done*,’ said Uncle Vincent, significantly.

“‘Certainly. The way it was done it could never fail,’ said Lupo.

“‘And —————,’ Cecala said. ‘This was death becoming him. How many sons of mothers he has condemned for nothing.’

“‘Hearing all this I asked:

“‘Who is this Petrosino?’

“‘He was the head of the secret police in New York,’ replied Cecala. ‘A homely man! Worse than the Bubonic Plague.’

“‘I never heard of him.’

“‘You will never meet him,’ said Cecala dryly, the others grinning.

“‘Then it was successful?’ continued Uncle Vincent.

“‘Certainly,’ replied Lupo. ‘It could not be successful in New York because he guarded his hide. Here he toted a revolver in his coat pocket and was guarded by two policemen a short distance behind him.’

“‘It is a good example for the policemen,’ continued Uncle Vincent. ‘No one will now dare to go to Palermo. There they will find only sure death.’

“Cina did not talk any because he was intent on spreading the counterfeit notes out on the garret floor. When he came downstairs to the workroom, however, he said:

“‘As soon as we can we must celebrate for joy; just now we will be content with a glass of wine.’

“They all went downstairs and sat at a table conversing in low voices and I could not understand what they said because the press made a noise and interfered with my hearing.

“I and Uncle Vincent continued to work at the press under Calichio’s directions. Sylvester would take the notes as they were printed and spread them out on the floor in the garret to dry.

Bernardo was stationed outside armed with rifle and revolver to guard the house and to 'spot' any person who might pass or prowl about the premises.

"In the afternoon of that day Lupo, Cecala, and Cina went outside and had some sport trying out their revolvers against the trees. When they returned Lupo asked Calichio how long it would take to print the ten thousand two-dollar bills. About twenty days was Calichio's estimate.

"Lupo then told Calichio that he would leave the plant, but would return at the end of the month and bring plates for five-dollar American notes. He addressed Calichio as 'dear Don Peppe' and told him to be prepared for the work and to take particular pains with the five-dollar notes, because he intended sending some of them to Italy.

" 'Have no doubts,' replied Calichio. 'I have never done any work that was useless, and you know it. My work has always been perfect.'

" 'Bravo, Don Peppe, we know that you are a professor at it,' said Cecala.

"That same night about six P. M. Cecala, Lupo, and Cina went away, leaving me with

Calichio, Uncle Vincent, Sylvester, and Bernardo.

“During that month (March, 1909) we worked without interruption printing the two-dollar notes. About the 27th, the first twenty thousand dollars of the counterfeit two-dollar notes were ready and were turned over to Cina and Sylvester, who were to bring them to New York.

“After this first job of Calichio’s workmanship had been turned over, on the last Sunday in March Lupo returned in company with Cina, Sylvester and Giglio, who brought the plates for the five-dollar notes and about twenty thousand sheets of paper upon which to print the additional money.

“Upon receiving the plates Calichio looked them over attentively and said that they were copper plates and not zinc, and that there was need of slight retouching. He detected several lines that were not shown in the photograph on the face of the note. These lines needed to be etched into the plates in the picture, which represented a farmer and an old man with a woman and a dog.

“Lupo explained to Calichio that Cecala was

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on the road about New York, Brooklyn and Hoboken, selling the two-dollar notes, but that as soon as he finished up this work he would return to the stone house and oversee the work there.

"Calichio prepared the press, fixed the inks, and printed the first proofs for the green side of the five-dollar notes. These were pronounced very good by Lupo and Uncle Vincent and they ordered that fifteen or twenty thousand of them be printed. Whatever paper was left was to be used for the two-dollar notes, which were very good and easily disposed of.

"On the night of the 29th, or 30th of March, 1909, Lupo left in company with Uncle Vincent and Cina. Before leaving, however, instructions were given to Bernardo, Giglio and Sylvester to count the notes printed daily so that none could be unaccounted for and sold into circulation. The fear that cheating might be practiced was evidently in Lupo's mind.

"We had been working about a week on the green side of the five-dollar notes when on April 5th, or 6th, Cina came to the stone house and told us to suspend the work and start in on the two-dollar notes, because there was a large de-



mand for them from Boston, Buffalo and Chicago, where customers were anxiously awaiting a new supply. Calichio immediately got the press ready to print another ten thousand of the two-dollar notes.

"It was at this time that I decided not to continue the work and left the press because I was not spoken to but ignored entirely. Even Sylvester and Giglio called me by an obscene name and referred to me in the most distasteful language, horrible to hear because of the profanity. I told Cina I wanted him to write to Cecala and tell him to send me sufficient money for my fare to New York. At this Cina answered in the Sicilian dialect:

" 'You are waiting for me to blow your brains out. Now that we are at the point where we can earn some money, you get sassy. Here you are dealing with gentlemen; otherwise, by this time you would be dead. Go ahead and work. No more of this fussing.'

"Then turning to Sylvester and Giglio, Cina continued: '(Piciotti) Boys, watch this Calabrian, and if he don't want to work, shoot him and make a hole for him in the farm.'

"After hearing this I felt like a whipped dog



and kept my mouth closed. I went over to the press and started in to work. Calichio came over to me and said:

“ ‘Don Antonio, look out. Don’t act this way with these people, because they are all of the (Mala-vita) Mafia and will do you harm in an instant. As long as you are among them you must obey orders, as I do, using prudence.’ ”

“Now it happened that for two weeks Calichio had not received his weekly salary and he became nervous for this reason. One day, when I did not want to print on wet paper, he dressed and went away. I, thinking that he had just gone out, stopped working and waited for him to return. But at night, when Sylvester, Giglio and Bernardo saw that Calichio did not return, *they threatened me with death*. Sylvester pointed a loaded revolver at me saying that he would dig my eyes out; Giglio, taking an axe in his hand, said he wanted to cut my head off, but Caterina intervened and the threatening stopped. Sylvester left the stone house to carry the news to New York.

“Three days went by without any work being done, then Calichio returned in company with Sylvester and Cina. Cina handed me a note

from Cecala which informed me that I must obey Calichio's order or suffer terrible consequences. I worked on against my will under Calichio's orders."

## CHAPTER XV

### SOME "AFTER-DINNER" CONFESSIONS

"ONE night in the month of April (1909) I was sitting with the bandits in the stone house and listening to their stories. Calichio, Sylvester, Giglio and Bernardo were there. Among other exploits Calichio remarked that he had once printed one million lire for a baronial family residing at Naples in Italy. This was about fifteen years back, he said, when his father was alive.

"Sylvester boasted that his first sentence was for five years in the reformatory as a minor. He ran away from the reformatory in company with several other boys and got into the horse-stealing business. He was sentenced several times for small offenses and he once was arrested for carrying concealed weapons.

"During his imprisonment he came to know a certain Terranova, who was a half-brother of Morello, and they became fast friends. They

stole horses in New York and sold them in other cities at reduced prices; or they would bring the horses to friends in the country (Highland) and receive payment. He told of being arrested once when with Morello's son and brother; they had thrown a bomb into a store in Mott Street. They were let go because there were no witnesses to the crime. In concluding his recitation Sylvester said:

“ ‘One night I went with the Morello brothers and other friends into a hall where a Jewish wedding was being celebrated. As we entered the hall we recognized two policemen who had helped us before in our jobs. Our idea was to steal watches. We succeeded in stealing about fifteen watches when a Jew I was robbing got onto me. He grabbed me by the coat and called the police. The policeman knew me and took my part. He pushed the Jew aside and told him to go away. The policeman said he knew me to be a fine young man for more than ten years. The policeman told the Jew he was lying and that if he said any more about the matter he would be put under arrest. The Jew was crest-fallen, but went on dancing all the same. As we came outside, I gave three watches to the

policeman, two of silver and one of gold. I disposed of the others in New Jersey. We divided the proceeds equally among us.'

"Then Giglio made the boast that the police had never been able to arrest him. He had been in great danger, though, he said. One night in the winter of 1906 he went to Newburgh to steal a horse and carriage. While running away with the stolen property he was shot at twice. Neither bullet hit him, though, he said. Two months later the same horse and carriage were sold in Poughkeepsie for one hundred dollars.

"Bernardo had nothing to relate except the innocent amusement of having stolen fruit in his native town. The others grinned.

"On April 26th or 27th the second lot of Calichio's two-dollar notes were ready. They totalled fifteen thousand dollars and were wrapped up in rags. Giglio and Sylvester took them to New York.

"Calichio and I then renewed work on the five-dollar notes, which we figured on finishing about the middle of May, when a communication from New York made us stop again on the five-dollar notes, and we started on the third lot of Calichio's two-dollar notes. During the month of

May, I, Calichio, Sylvester, Giglio and Bernardo all had a hand in the completion of this third lot of two-dollar notes, which amounted to \$10,000; then, too, we finished up by the end of May, \$14,700 of the five-dollar notes. During this period Calichio received his wages punctually, but he did not let on to me.

“When the work had been completed I called Caterina aside and told her that I was going to New York and would not return to the stone house, as I did not intend to continue at that sort of work. In fact, I dismantled the press, piece by piece, took the genuine five-dollar note that was used for comparison, it being the original from which the plates were made, and said to Giglio:

“‘Don Vincenzo, I am going to New York to seek rooms and will see Cecala there; I am going because, counting this last batch, I have printed about \$60,000 and have received nothing for my labor.’

“‘You deserve to have your head smashed on a rock,’ was the cheerful reply. ‘If the money is not yet sold, who will you see to get paid?’

“‘Cecala.’

“‘Cecala is not in New York. If he were, I



certainly would bring him this last batch of money. We must wait until my brother-in-law comes.'

" 'I don't care whether it is sold or not. I am in a miserable condition and will not remain here.'

" 'Do as you like, but look out, though, if you do any harm there will not be a hair left of you.'

" 'I want to go about my own business and do not care about others.' Thereupon, I took a suit-case with a few rags that I had left and went on foot to the Highland Railroad station where I changed the five-dollar bill and bought a ticket to New York. Arriving in the city I went directly to my aunt's, who was surprised to see me so poorly clad and in such a miserable condition. I told her that I had had a quarrel with my employer because he had not paid me.

"On June 2nd, while walking about my business, I met Cecala at Bleecker and Carmine Streets. He laughed at me, shook my hand, and inquired why I had not remained at the stone house in Highland and continued the work.

" 'I could not continue,' I replied, 'because I was treated too shabbily there by the others.

And why should I continue to work when no word had come to us from New York for more than two weeks?

“‘Well, Don Antonio,’ said Cecala, ‘I will fix all your affairs so that Caterina will remain in New York, for you and Don Peppe *must continue the work*. The man who made the plates has been working on another set of Canadian notes, not like the first that we printed, but of the same denomination, five dollars.’

“‘Write and let Caterina come now,’ I said. ‘As to my doing more work for you, let’s talk about that later.’

“‘It is not necessary to write; I will telephone. Come with me.’ From a drug store at Carmine and Bleecker Streets Cecala telephoned to Highland, or rather to Cina’s house.

“Cina’s wife said that her husband had gone with Ignazio (Lupo) to Newburgh and that she would tell him when he returned. Coming out of the drug store Cecala handed me ten dollars, saying:

“‘Take this ten dollars and find rooms for yourself. I will provide for the rest later when Caterina comes to-morrow or the next day.

'Your things will arrive in a few days.' He told me to keep him advised. I could meet him at a barber shop in Carmine Street, he said.

"Not seeing anything of Caterina, on June 4th I wrote a letter to Cina at Highland, and requested him to send my things immediately and to give Caterina the money for her fare to New York.

"Cina received my letter and got the impression from it that I was going to tell the police, and he went right over to the stone house to ship my furniture.

"On the fifth of June, in the evening, Don Peppe (Calichio) came to my aunt's house and there told me that he had run away from the stone house with Caterina because they had threatened to kill him. He said that the threats were made by Sylvester, Giglio and Bernardo. Hearing this I hastened out on the stoop and saw Caterina all trembling. She said: 'I don't know how we escaped—Don Peppe and me.'

" 'Why?'

" 'Bernardo, Sylvester and Giglio wanted to kill us; and Bernardo had already got hold of a shovel to dig a hole.'

" 'And who gave you the money for the fare?'

“ ‘Lupo.’

“ ‘How much did he give you?’

“ ‘He gave ten dollars to Don Peppe in the presence of Cina, Uncle Vincent, and the other men, whom I do not know, and he gave me five dollars.’

“ ‘Well,’ I said, ‘to-night you will sleep at my brother’s home, and do not tell him any stories nor let him understand the circumstances of our trouble. To-morrow I will find a house. Cecala gave me ten dollars the other day.’

“ ‘I thanked Calichio for getting Caterina out of the stone house to New York, and then went away leaving Caterina at the home of my brother.’”

## CHAPTER XVI

### EVADING THE GANG IN VAIN

"ON June 6th I rented some rooms at No. 171 Thompson Street and paid for a month in advance. I then went to the barber shop to find Cecala. I told him of hiring the rooms and that I needed a deposit to have the gas turned on. He told me that he would look out for everything in a day or so when he had the time. He showed a receipt for my goods, which had been shipped from Highland the day before and which would soon arrive, he said. He gave me five dollars with which to pay the charges on my furniture when it would arrive. When I asked him how I was to get food, he handed me a card and said that I was to go to the address and say that he sent me and that provisions would be furnished me. On the card was D. Milone, No. 235 East Ninety-seventh Street.

" 'Will I get what I want there?'

“‘Certainly,’ Cecala said. ‘Just mention my name and all will be well with you there.’

“After arranging with an express company to have my goods taken from the dock to the Thompson Street rooms, I went to the Milone address and asked for Cecala.

“‘Who is this Cecala?’ inquired a short man of ruddy complexion and stout face.

“‘Why, don’t you know him?’ I asked. ‘He gave me this address where I was to come and buy groceries.’

“‘Have you inquired in the bank downstairs?’

“‘No.’

“‘Go and see.’

“I went down to the bank of one De Luca and found a barrel containing groceries addressed to Luigi Cosentino. This I had brought to my rooms in Thompson Street.

“‘You must pay sixty cents,’ said the banker, ‘right away.’ And Cecala paid the money for me.

“Going upstairs again Cecala said in the presence of Giglio and Sylvester:

“‘Don Antonio; we must continue the work. Not in that place (the stone house), but in another farm that has been rented by Giglio and



that is very far from Highland. We will not work any more with the same press because it is not very good as to impression. We must buy a new press, which Calichio is negotiating for now, a new model.'

" 'I will not come again,' I replied, 'because I have found work as a compositor and I am to go to work to-morrow.'

" 'Don't begin to make trouble. You know all our secrets now and we can't let you go.'

" 'But why don't you let Calichio continue the work?'

" 'Calichio is no good at the press. You know of what he is capable.'

" 'I cannot go,' I repeated.

" 'Listen, Don Antonio, I promise you that you will not work much. Print at least the other ten-thousand sheets of paper for two-dollar notes and the work will be completed. Then we will suspend operations for the summer, and will begin again in the Fall.'

" 'Mr. Cecala, I will return to print the paper that is left, but you must give me, at the beginning of August, \$400 because I want to return to Italy; then I will come back to New York in November. Are you satisfied?'

“‘Have no doubts as to that. By the first two weeks of August I will give you \$500 and not \$400, because by that time I will have sold all the money. But will you return to America?’

“‘Yes, because I am going to Italy only to arrange family affairs.’

“Calichio now arrived and said that he had found the party who wanted to sell the press, and he suggested that I go and see the man. At this juncture Giglio interrupted to say that the press, which we had been using, had been broken up and thrown into the woods on the farm that had just been rented in his name for the new location of the plant.

“‘But,’ put in Calichio, ‘is that farm a place that is at all likely to be suspected?’

“‘Certainly not,’ said Giglio, ‘it is far from Highland, about three hours over the road, and is situated on the Hudson River. It is a frame house standing by itself so that in working there will be no noise heard by neighbors. And there is no road where people pass by the house.’

“‘You mean,’ Cecala interrupted, ‘that you can work without fear of being disturbed?’

“‘Not even the flies will disturb us.’

“‘Good,’ said Cecala, turning to me. ‘Go and

see this Riso (the pressman) and see if he really wants to sell the press.'

" 'Why should I go and not some one else?'

" 'You are of the trade and know whether there are any defects.'

" 'And if he asks me who I am, what shall I answer?'

" 'Tell him you are Cosentino and have a shop on One Hundred and Fortieth Street.'

" 'Why don't you come with me?'

" 'No,' said Cecala, 'I will wait here.'

" 'It would be better that you come along. Two heads are better than one.'

"Cecala was persuaded and together we went to the printing shop to look over the presses. Riso, the pressman, said that he wanted to sell the press because he had not enough work to keep it occupied and was short fifty dollars to pay off the mortgage. He explained that in order to sell it he must first get permission from the factory people, who held the mortgage. He bought it about eight months previously.

"A price of \$85 was agreed to.

" 'But,' queried Riso, 'what do you need the press for?'

“ ‘For a printing shop,’ I replied.

“ ‘And have you a shop now?’

“ ‘Yes.’

“ ‘Where?’

“I gave him the One Hundred and Fortieth Street address suggested by Cecala before we entered the printing shop.

“Riso assured me that the press was first class and would turn out fine work.

“On June 10th, the next day, the press was paid for and carted off in a covered wagon. I had taken the press apart without arousing suspicion that it was to be taken on a long journey. The parts were taken off because of the danger of leaving them on the press body while in shipment. On the sides of the closed wagon was the name of Antonio Armato, Bakery. The man who drove it was introduced to me by Giglio as his godfather. Giglio explained that the press was to be carted on godfather’s wagon because he had been unable to get an express wagon at the moment.

“In order to keep up the bluff before Riso I said to Giglio:

“ ‘Well, it is just as well. You know where

my shop is and can have this man take the press there. I will remain downtown and attend to other matters while you take the press uptown.' Cecala squinted at me admiringly.

"On the 13th of June Cecala informed me that I was to be ready to go to Highland at six o'clock the next morning. I was to go to Cina's house and remain there a day, he said, and then I would be taken to the new farm. He told me that the press had been shipped and taken to the house by Sylvester, who had returned to New York. Cecala also said that he had given Calichio ten dollars with which to pay the fares and that I was to meet Don Peppe (Calichio) at his Jones Street house early the next morning and then board the train in company with him. Money would be forwarded to me as soon as I reached Highland; Cecala had none with him at the present.

" 'I hope you will not treat me as you did before,' I said. 'Promise to pay and not pay.'

" 'Have no doubt. I will take in \$200 tonight from a man in Brooklyn, and will send you ten dollars by Giglio.'

"Cecala said Giglio was in New York then at the house of his (Giglio's) brother-in-law in

Jackson Street. This brother-in-law had married one of Cina's sisters, but he knew nothing about the counterfeiting scheme.

"At five o'clock in the morning of June 14th I went to Calichio's house and found him packing a suit-case with inks and plates. One of the sets I remember was the Bank of Montreal design with a baby on the green side, marvelously clear zinc plates. Calichio told me they were to be used for making the new Canadian five-dollar notes.

" 'When are they to be printed?' I asked.

" 'When we get to the new farm.'

"I told Calichio that I certainly would not print any of them at this season and he suggested that they probably were to be printed in November. He said:

" 'They will probably be printed in November, at the beginning of the winter season, for now the waters are troubled. The police is making arrests daily.'

"He placed the plates in the suit-case and together we went to Weehawken Ferry and arrived in Highland at 11 A.M. There found Peppino waiting for us at the station with a carriage. He drove to his brother's house



(Cina's). There we found Uncle Vincent and Bernardo, the others having gone to Poughkeepsie on business and left word that they would return by evening. After lunch I played with Cina's children while Calichio, Uncle Vincent, Bernardo and Peppino locked themselves into a room for a conference. About 8 P. M. Salvatore Cina returned from Poughkeepsie with Sylvester and immediately ordered his brother to prepare the horse and carriage and take us to the 'Third' farm."

## CHAPTER XVII

### CAUGHT AGAIN!

“ABOUT two o'clock in the morning we arrived, Calichio, Bernardo, Sylvester, Peppino and Cina, at the 'Third' farm. Peppino returned immediately from the 'Third' farm to Cina's house. The four of us who remained slept on straw, there being no mattresses. About three o'clock the next afternoon Cina brought us some mattresses, pillows and covers; some food-stuffs and ten quarts of wine. Cina remarked that this was a splendid place, and that no one could disturb us there. He gave the following orders:

“Calichio and I were to remain in the house and work. Uncle Vincent would watch along the railroad track to see if any strangers came near. About noontime, Uncle Vincent would come in and do the cooking; then Bernardo, armed with revolver and rifle, were to do his turn and guard the farm. He was to be helped

in this by Giglio and Sylvester whenever they were about. Cina said that if Calichio or I wanted to have our mail addressed to us we must tell our folks and friends to send it to 20 Duane Street, Poughkeepsie, where Uncle Turi (the well-dressed man referred to before in this story) had opened a grocery store. Cina assured me that news would be brought to us daily from the outside and that a horse and carriage had been brought for the express purpose of going to and from Poughkeepsie and bringing groceries.

"Calichio made the press ready and we began work on the fourth batch of the two-dollar notes. There was no interruption all that day but, on the next morning, June 17th (1909), Calichio declared he wanted to leave for New York because he had had a bad dream during the night and there was news from his family.

"Bernardo accompanied Calichio to the station and I and Uncle Vincent remained alone, walking about the grounds in front of the house.

"About 11 A. M. Uncle Vincent was preparing macaroni for the noonday lunch when two well-dressed men and prosperous appearing, driving a horse and carriage, stopped in front

of the house. One man was about fifty, the other about thirty. They tied the horse to a tree and came over to me, addressing me in English.

“‘Are you Italian?’

“‘Yes,’ I replied.

“‘Have you rented this farm?’

“‘No.’

“‘Who is the owner?’

“‘A man named Giglio.’

“‘Where can I see this Giglio?’

“‘In New York. His wife is sick,’ replied Uncle Vincent.

“‘When does he return?’

“‘We don’t know.’

“‘We had come to buy this farm and would like to look inside. Will you permit us to enter and see?’

“‘No,’ was Uncle Vincent’s instant answer. ‘We are not the proprietors and are here to guard the fruit. Return some other day when Giglio is here and he will give you permission.’

“The men assured us that they would get the permission to enter the house and drove away. When they were gone Uncle Vincent with a pale face said to me:

“Don Antonio, I feel sure these men are detectives. Should they return there will be others with them and they will arrest us. In case we fall like mice in a trap don't say who you know. Otherwise we are all ruined. If they find the press we must insist that we found it in the house, and don't know to whom it belongs. Let us go and burn what was printed yesterday in order to avoid suspicion.’

“‘I am not going back,’ I answered. ‘I am going through the woods to the railroad tracks to the station and then back to New York.’

“‘If you go away I will not let any one come near the house. And if those two men return I will kill them.’

“‘Do as you like,’ I replied. So saying I took my hat and jumper and walked along the railroad tracks for about an hour until I came to the Highland station.

“I was peacefully at home in Thompson Street on June 20th when Cecala, Cina and Sylvester arrived. As soon as Cecala saw me he said:

“‘You were very much afraid. You must not be so frightened. The people who came to the farm were men of a good sort and not de-

TECTIVES. But you did well in not letting them enter the house.'

" 'Since I am away,' I replied to Cecala, 'do not talk of continuing the work. I will not return. I don't care to fall into a trap alone, and you all out of it.'

" 'Better if we remain out. We can help you.'

" 'Bother the help. Leave me in peace. I want to attend to my own affairs and be at rest.'

" 'No. Now that we have started to print we must finish the paper that is left unprinted.'

" 'I will not return to the farm. Make Calichio continue the work.'

" '*You must return and complete the work,*' said Cina with arrogance.

" 'After about five minutes of silence Cina again did the talking. He said:

" 'Very well, we will not return to that farm but in order to have you content we will draw up a contract and you will appear as Luigi Cosentino, the proprietor of the second farm. Then you may return and continue the work without danger. I will telephone to-night and have the press brought to the stone house. The people nearby the stone house have seen you be-



fore, and when I tell them that the place is now yours they will not have any suspicion.'

" 'I want to find work here in the city. I have worked for you for seven months and have received only forty dollars in all for it.'

" 'Well,' said Cecala, 'but I will give you five hundred dollars as soon as you have finished this last job. Is that satisfactory?'

" 'Surely.'

"I figured that if I got the five hundred dollars I could return to Italy and not have any more bother, and so I consented to go back and complete the work. Cecala and Cina went with me to a notary public in Elizabeth Street and a contract or lease of the second farm was drawn up. I appeared and signed as Luigi Cosentino. The person from whom I rented the farm was one whom I had never seen before. He was called Salvatore Galasso. The notary gave a copy of the paper to me and another to Galasso, and Cecala paid the charges.

"On June 24th (1909) I and Calichio began work anew on the second farm, at the stone house, and continued until we had finished \$13,500 more of the two-dollar notes. When this amount was printed, Calichio went to New York and left

me with Uncle Vincent, Bernardo and Giglio to cut to regular size the two-dollar notes and count them and pack them in bundles of 100 each. This work was done during the month of July.

“On the 28th or the 29th of July Cina arrived and stopped all the work, saying that operations were suspended for the summer. The last lot printed, he said, was to be divided among fifteen of us. Cecala had left about twenty days before, and as no word had been received from him it was supposed that he had been arrested. Turning to me Cina said:

“‘You, Don Antonio, divide up the money for fifteen persons, and see what will come to each. Each can sell for himself or exchange them.’

“‘I will not take any of them, that is certain,’ I replied, ‘because I have no friends to whom I can sell them. And what is more, I will risk imprisonment.’

“‘That means that you will leave your portion to me, and in time I will sell it for you,’ said Cina.

“‘I don’t want to know whether it is left to you or somebody else. Only, you will bear in

mind that together with Cecala you have promised \$500 with which I was to go to Italy when this work was completed.'

" 'Well, if Cecala returns and brings good money, you will be given what was promised you. In the meantime, dismantle the press and give me the plates, for I must save them. Put them in a box together with the ink that was not used.'

"Without losing any time I took some boards and made a box and put into it the plates for the two-dollar notes, check letter 'C,' plate number 1110; also the five-dollar copper plates, and the second Canadian note plates, which had not been used, and some cans of ink. I nailed a cover over the box, and in the presence of Uncle Vincent, Bernardo, Giglio and Cina, I gave the box to Cina and he said:

" 'We hope to open this box in November if things go well.'

"The first Canadian plates—those that had been used together with the first two-dollar note plates, Check letter 'A,' plate number 1111—were wrapped in some rags and buried in a hole on the farm by Bernardo. The hole was about two hundred feet from the house in the woods back

of the house. Then all the ink that remained outside was buried in the woods back of the house; so were all the hundred thousand pieces of paper of bad prints and proofs, etc., buried there. The inks, though, were put in a macaroni box before being put into the ground.

"I dismantled the press, taking it into four parts, and packed it up in boards. At six o'clock that evening Peppino Cina came with a truck, pulled by a team of horses, and the press was loaded onto the truck; also the box with the plates put on, and the whole business was covered with hay. Then Uncle Vincent, Bernardo and Giglio were driven off toward Cina's farm by Peppino Cina. Cina and I took another road in a carriage and went to his farm.

"Arriving at Cina's farm at about 11:30 that night we sat down and ate heartily and drank wine. Towards the end of the meal Cina gave Peppino (his brother), Giglio and Bernardo each \$800 of the counterfeit money, saying to them:

"'Boys, the work is done. From to-morrow on each can attend to his own business. You can take this money and exchange it yourselves.

"'If we are going to continue, and if we need

you, I will advise you, paying you double what you can earn anywhere else.'

"Hearing this I said to Cina:

" 'See if you can't give me some money with which I may get to New York to-morrow, without my looking around for Cecala or anybody else; and also keep it in mind that by August 15th I get the \$500 so that I can go to Italy. If the money is not given me I will endeavor to get my passage to Italy and return in November.'

" 'Have no doubts about the money,' said Cina. 'To-morrow I will give you five dollars. The money that has been promised you will be yours. In fact, I will bring it to your house as soon as we have it ready, as we know your address in New York.'

"Next morning Cina gave me five dollars, and drove me to the Highland station, where I boarded the eight o'clock train for New York.

"After being in the city three days I found employment in a printing shop in Brooklyn and worked there as an honest man, putting away all thoughts of evil and tried to forget what I had been through in Highland for the past nine months.



“On August 12, 1909, I read in an Italian newspaper about the arrest of some persons who passed some of the notes printed by me. Thinking that some one might mention my name, I wrote a letter to Cina, addressed to No. 20 Duane Street, Poughkeepsie, informing him that as I had not seen any one up to the present, and had not got what was promised me, I had decided to leave for Italy on August 15th.

“Then I remained in Brooklyn working, without the gang knowing my whereabouts. My employment for this period was in the printing shop of Matteo Vestuto.

“One Sunday in September I met Calichio on the street. He told me that he was going to my house to get a suit of clothes that had been sent down from the stone house with my furniture.

“‘Don Peppe,’ said I, ‘Caterina is at home and she will give you the suit which was put away. If you see any of the *Gentlemen* don’t say that you saw me, because I have written them that I am in Italy.’

“‘I have not seen them any more,’ replied Calichio. ‘Neither do I want to see them, after what I have been through. Bear in mind, Don



Antonio, that I have not yet received all the money that is coming to me, but ————, if they come again to me, I know what to tell them ————.’ He went off in a very angry mood.

“On the 16th of November, 1909, I read in an Italian newspaper of the arrest of Giuseppe Morello, Antonio Cecala, Domenico Milone, Luciana Maddi, Giuseppe Boscarini and Leolina Vasi. They were all put under bail of from seven to fifteen thousand dollars. Three days later I read in the newspapers that all these ‘gentlemen,’ whom I knew, were released on bail, and were at liberty awaiting trial.

“I became frightened, thinking that these fellows might think that I had said something to the police as they knew I was dissatisfied with the treatment they had given me. Losing no time I packed my things and went to live with an American family in Dominick Street.”

## CHAPTER XVIII

### PINCHING THE GREENHORN

"I HAD been at this place about a month and a half when, on the night of January 4th, 1910, about eight o'clock, six men came into the house and, motioning me not to move, declared that I and Caterina were under arrest.

" 'But who are you?' I asked in Italian.

" 'We are government officers,' one of them replied in Italian, and he showed me his shield.

" 'Well, the place is at your disposal,' I said, sitting down on a chair and smoking my pipe, feeling quite sure of myself.

"When they had finished searching the rooms and us personally they brought Caterina and I to the office of the Federal Secret Service (United States Secret Service) and we were taken to the head of the service, a Mr. William J. Flynn. To him I had no courage to deny what I had done and confessed all. I assumed all the responsibility for Caterina, and told

everything without any thought of getting off without punishment. Following my arrest the Secret Service men arrested Cina, Giglio, Uncle Salvatore, Sylvester and Lupo. On January 26th, 1910, Ignazio Lupo, Giuseppe Morello, Antonio Cecala, Salvatore Palermo, Giuseppe Calichio and Nick Sylvester appeared before the Judge of the United States Court to answer the indictment of making and passing counterfeit money.

"I appeared before the jury in the Federal Court as a witness, repeating what I had confessed to the Secret Service men. I did not contradict myself on cross-examination when the defense tried to show that I was a Calabrian bandit and had come to America for the purpose of joking with the law and justice, and that I was telling these 'stories' and thus having eight innocent and perfect gentlemen condemned.

"I was not disturbed at the assault made upon my character by the ignorant Italian press, who through libels and threats of many kinds tried to shake my determination. I only laughed when I read and heard of those things.

"The Black-Hand crowd should be destroyed. The one great blow that started the downfall

of this murderous band of outlaws has been dealt by William J. Flynn, when he sent to prison the arch-bandits Lupo and Morello, and the lesser evils, Cecala, Cina, Giglio, etc.

“My final word here is that my purpose in giving testimony before the Secret Service was not done to have eight fathers of families condemned, but for the purpose of removing from among us eight Sicilian criminals who horrified and preyed upon honest men under the leadership of murderers of the worst type that are a menace to civilization.

“(Signed) Antonio Viola Comito.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE "BLACK-HAND" DOCTOR

THERE are characters in this story of Comito's of whom he never got a glimpse until the case came to trial. There are still others involved of whom he never even heard; in fact, not a few big fish are in the net of the Secret Service whose names will probably never be revealed to the public. This circumstance does not prevent me, however, from surrounding Comito's statement with certain additional facts that may serve to illuminate the plan followed by Lupo and Morello in building up their sinister organization.

It often happens that disputes occur among the different elements of the Italian criminals in New York city and in other parts of this country. For instance, the Neapolitan element deals almost exclusively in the traffic of women. Sometimes this business is invaded by a hostile group from among the Sicilian element. In-

variably quarrels result and the disputes nearly always end in a shooting or a stabbing affair.

It is well known to the Service that the quarrels of the Italian criminals among themselves are settled without the help of the police whenever this is at all possible. When a gang member is wounded, secrecy requires that no ambulance be called or a doctor summoned who is not a friend of the gang. This precaution is easily appreciated when one comes to think that a call for an ambulance would require the presence of a policeman and a public report being made of the affair. Again, should a doctor, who is not known to the gang, be called in, he is required to make a record of the occurrence and report any suspicious injury to the police. If there is a death the coroner must needs be notified. To avoid entanglement and trouble with the authorities the various gangs have impressed in their service a physician or two who may be relied upon to bind up the wounds and keep the affair a secret. Many murders are in this way covered up and escape the attention of the police and the public.

There was a man at the trial of the counterfeiters who was unknown to Comito. Upon this



man's testimony Morello expected to prove that he was ill in the house during the period that he was actually out and around and very active in the counterfeiting scheme.

Dr. Salvatore Romano is the man. The doctor perjured himself and testified to please Morello, whose vengeance he feared.

After being indicted by the Federal Grand Jury, we were able to get a statement from Dr. Romano. Incidentally this statement disclosed the method whereby Morello and Lupu gathered their first money by sending "Black-Hand" letters to countrymen who were suspected of having money, or who could in any way be coerced into being useful to the gang.

Dr. Romano's cross-examination follows:

Q. Tell us, doctor, from the beginning, how you happened to get mixed up; start from the time you knew Mr. Morello.

A. I met him in this country. He was living in East One Hundred and Seventh Street; we were living at East One Hundred and Sixth Street. He comes from the same town that my grandmother and mother hail from in Sicily—Corleone—and while I was studying in my third year at the College of Physicians and Surgeons

at Columbia, my folks received a letter from a "Black-Hand" Society.

Q. Who received it?

A. My mother.

Q. She knew Morello how long previous to this?

A. She had known him on the other side; never had anything to do with him here.

Q. About when was it she got this "Black-Hand" letter?

A. Seven years ago; I was a third-year student in the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Q. What was the substance of the letter?

A. The substance of the letter was that unless a certain amount of money was paid they would kill me. Naturally, my folks did not tell me anything at all about it for fear that I would get excited, neglect my studies, and so fail in my examinations. The folks kept the thing quiet for a few days. The "Black Handers" also said that if anything were told to the police authorities, *the murder would take place anyway*—money or no money. You see, my father was not here. I was a young man, my brother was a small boy, and my family did not know what to do at the time. My grandmother, though,

knew this man Morello to be mixed up with people of questionable character, and so she went to him or he happened to meet her (I don't know which); anyway, she confided the thing to Morello. He said, "All right, don't get excited; they don't kill people off all at once. Wait until you get another letter. Then we will see if we can find out the party who writes those letters.

Finally, another letter was written. Then a third, and a fourth letter came. *Morello always took the letters under the pretext of studying the handwriting and to find out the origin of the letter.* Eventually, he found out the origin of the letter, he said and—

Q. What was the origin?

A. Never found out. He just said that he had found out that they were willing to settle for \$1,000, but that he would pay \$100 and that he would make sure they returned the money to him after they found out who he was; he said that we need not worry any more.

Q. Did you pay the \$100?

A. No. Morello offered to pay the \$100 himself and expected to get it back. He said: "I will pay and see that they return it to me."

Q. Who would return it?

A. Those people would return the money again to him.

Q. He said that he would pay the money and that he would get it back from the Black Handers?

A. Yes. Then the whole thing quieted down and naturally my people thought they were under obligations to this man Morello. And then when the danger was over my folks told me about it and remarked about what a terrible thing we had escaped.

About three or four months later, Morello came around and said to my mother:

Q. Did you hear him?

A. No. She told me.

(Continuing) "I have a notion to get married. I'm in with a woman who has a baby as the result of our relations. Now that I want to get married, I want to break off this relation, and if it is not inconvenient to you I would like to bring this baby, this little girl, to your house until everything is arranged."

Q. That is the illegitimate child?

A. She could walk; was over one year old.

Q. Who was the woman?

A. I do not know.

Q. At that time he lived on Chrystie Street?

A. No. I understand he had a restaurant. Of course, my folks said that it was no trouble for them. There were three or four women in the household, and it would be no trouble for them to take care of the little child.

Q. All the time you thought that you were under obligations to him?

A. Yes; just for that thing.

Q. Don't you know who the woman was?

A. No; never saw her.

Q. Sure you didn't?

A. No.

Q. Do you know her?

A. No, she was a Sicilian. I don't know her personally.

Q. Is she living?

A. I imagine she is.

Q. What was her name? What was she called?

A. Didn't know at all. Probably my grandmother would know.

Q. Was this after or before the barrel murder?

A. I think the barrel murder was after that.



Q. He lived on Chrystie Street at that time?

A. Yes. And so the baby was brought to our house and we took care of it, a nice little baby. Nothing happened at all—no disturbance. They came around to our house about once a week to see the baby. I kept on studying; never bothered my head about anything at all. I went out early in the morning and came back late; never bothered much with the affairs of the family. That baby died. First it got the measles, then bronchial pneumonia. It was a little over two years old when it died.

Q. Did Morello marry this woman?

A. The woman he married is his present wife. He had got her from the other side. The sister (Morello's) had gone to the other side and arranged for this marriage. So nothing happened until after I was graduated. Then these people began to call on me as a doctor.

Q. He then lived in East One Hundred and Seventh Street?

A. I think in East One Hundred and Seventh Street, and he began to call on me; and then the brother-in-law and then cousin, etc., called.

Q. Who is his brother-in-law?



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A. He has three brothers-in-law, Lupo, Lima and Salima.

Q. Which one of his brothers-in-law did you treat?

A. I treated all three of them.

Q. Are Lima and Salima in this country now?

A. Yes, in New York City.

Q. And did you treat other relatives?

A. I treated all their relatives, and all free of charge. They would call me; I would examine them, prescribe, etc., but I got no pay.

Q. Did you ever ask them for any?

A. No.

Q. Why not?

A. On account of the obligations; also the familiarity. Right from the start I thought that I was doing a wise thing not to ask for money for my services.

Q. What did you know about Morello about that time?

A. My folks had told him all about those letters and he had fixed it all up; we had no disturbance because we were under his protection.

Q. Did you know that you were under his protection?

A. I knew as well as the family did.

Q. What protection did you think that he could give you?

A. Receiving no disturbance from the "Black Handers."

Q. Did you know that he was connected with the "Black Handers" then?

A. I did not know that he was a "Black Handers," but I knew from the fact that he had arranged everything that he must have known something about these people.

Thus I became the regular physician for these people and never got any pay. In the meantime I tried to get as much hospital experience as I could and get out of New York, because, if a man goes out of New York to a strange place without any experience—

Q. Why did you want to leave New York?

A. Not because I was afraid, not because they were doing anything to me, but because I was tired of doing work for nothing; I never could put any money in the bank.

The whole number of relatives, babies and patients, amounted to about sixty. It would not be one day, but the next day, and all the time they were on my hands. And I got no pay.

My mother was in the same position. My mother is a midwife. I tried to get hospital experience, and as soon as I was in the position to leave New York I departed, and I have never heard from him at all except when I received letters from my mother who told me that they kept on frequenting the house.

Q. What was the interview you had with Commissioner Wood?<sup>1</sup> And when did you have that interview?

A. That was four or five years before I left New York. The main thing he wanted to know was whether I knew these people well enough to tell stories. Whether I could tell him that these people were "Black Handers"?

I had read in the newspapers that they had

<sup>1</sup> Commissioner Wood was at the time referred to here the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of the Detective Bureau of New York under Theodore Bingham. It was Wood who sent Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino to Italy on the mission, in the carrying out of which the Lieutenant was assassinated. In reference to this murdering of Petrosino, who was the man who went to Sing Sing and got information from DePriema, which led to the identifying of the man murdered and found in the barrel, I wish to refer the reader back to that part of Comito's statement where Comito tells of his visit to Morello's house in East One Hundred and Thirty-eighth Street, and especially to take note of the reference there made by Comito to "Michele, the Calabrian," and the conversation that took place between Morello and Cecala concerning the Calabrian. Then couple this with the reference made again to the Calabrian by Lupo (Page 113) in paying Michele's fare to Italy.

been in trouble with the law; but they had treated me fairly well and I said nothing against these people. Commissioner Wood wanted to know about these letters, and naturally I did not tell.

Q. Did you treat Cecala?

A. No, I never treated him.

Q. Did you ever treat any of the defendants besides Morello?

A. No. Lupo, Morello and Palermo. Palermo was operated on for something. At the time I was called in to give the ether.

Q. What was Morello's business after he gave up the grocery?

A. Real estate; then they started the real estate deal, the Ignatz Florio Association. The way they worked that was—I don't know how many got together, about nine or ten, and they started in by building a house and selling it—they said, "We will build a house and sell it and in that way there will be a big profit and from that profit we get dividends." They got people to buy shares; the shares were payable, I think, \$5 down and \$2 per month. So they came to my mother and she bought one share for herself, one in the name of my brother, and one in my

name. When they got enough money they bought a lot, built a house and sold it, and got a dividend of 40 per cent. You could then either take the dividend, and put the money in your pocket, or leave it and it would go on the share. So most of the people left their money to go to their credit.

Q. Who got the money?

A. They claimed there was a big boom in real estate and they made another deal; they got 35 or 30 per cent. dividend. Then they started to build eight tenement houses, four on One Hundred and Thirty-seventh Street and four on One Hundred and Thirty-eighth Street, near Cyprus Avenue.

At the time they were building, the crash came.

They took advantage of the prices and said, "We have not enough money to keep on; the shareholders will have to come together and pay more money on each share."

I paid \$10 extra on each share. At that time my mother had acquired eight shares. She had bought another for herself. Then my cousin had bought two for herself, which she did not want to keep, so my mother told her she would buy them from her.

Q. Did Morello know anything about your going to see Commissioner Wood; did you tell him?

A. Yes. I—

Q. What did you tell him?

A. I said that Commissioner Wood, when he found out that I would not give the information he wanted, said that I was just like the rest of them and then told me that I might go.

Q. Did you tell Morello before you went down?

A. No.

Q. What did Morello say when you told him that you had been down there?

A. He said that is the way you have to do everything.

Q. What do you know about the barrel murder?

A. Absolutely nothing at all.

Q. What do you know about Inzarillo?

A. He is considered of questionable character.

Q. Do you know the Terranova Brothers?

A. They are the stepbrothers of Morello.

Q. Do you know anything about them? Did you treat them?



A. Yes, quite a long while; they had a disease which required that they come to my house every day, both Morello and the Terranovas.

Q. When was that?

A. That went on for about two years.

Q. What two years?

A. The two years just preceding 1907 and 1908.

Q. Was Morello born with that deformed hand?

A. Yes. He was so much crippled that they called him "Little Finger."

Q. Then you did not treat Morello in 1909?

A. At the time that I stated I did see him at No. 107 East One Hundred and Thirty-eighth Street; also, I saw him in Rizzo's house, and he would complain of pains; he was always complaining.

Q. He was not sick in bed?

A. No.

Q. You did not have any consultation with Dr. Brancato?

A. No. I think that I may have had one consultation with him when he was at One Hundred and Thirty-eighth Street.

Q. When?

A. I think it was before the time I covered. I think it was in December, 1908, also.

Q. That means January and February?

A. No.

Q. He was not treating Morello?

A. He was the family physician in a way.

Q. What do you think of him?

A. Dr. Brancato? I want to state the fact as honestly as if he were my brother. I think he was a figurehead, too.

Q. Did he ever say about what he was going to testify?

A. He said we were up against a bad proposition. "Let us make our testimony as light as possible," he said. I asked him how we could avoid a thing of that kind. They would get us into trouble and we would have to stand for it.

Q. Who came to you and told you that you would have to testify?

A. Nobody; but this is the way it was done: They went to my mother and began to talk to her.

Q. Who?

A. Mrs. Morello and the mother of Morello and the brothers of Morello. So they went there and began to explain that they had got into very

serious trouble. They also said that the only way—

Q. Who?

A. That he could be possibly saved would be to produce an alibi. I was to say that he was not out at any time he was accused of being out. I was to understand that he was the wrong man mentioned in court. They explained to my mother that the police knew that Dr. Romano had been their physician. It would be only natural that they call me; I could then testify that I was treating Morello at the time and he was unable to get out when, the charges alleged, Morello was around and doing things in the counterfeiting plant.

They explained to my mother that there was no other man that could be called, because no other man would be trusted. The police knew I was Morello's physician, they said.

And then my mother asked them not to call me, that it would be putting me into trouble, and that I would have to abandon the business I had started.

They told her that it was an absolute necessity that I come down from Rochester and testify. If I did not come, they said, Morello would be

sentenced surely. "Naturally," they said, "we think if the doctor would come down, Morello will be free."

So my mother wrote to me. "This is the last proposition they are going to give you," she said. "I think you cannot avoid coming down."

Q. She wrote and told you about it? Have you got that letter?

A. No. Naturally I would not keep a letter of that kind. I thought the matter over. I knew the character of the men I had to deal with. I knew that if I refused and Morello got a big sentence they would put the whole thing up to me. I thought of my mother down here going out and in at night, and I had something to fear. Probably if it had been for myself only I would not have considered it; I would have looked at it differently. It seemed that I had no alternative in a case of this kind. They telegraphed me.

Q. Who?

A. The brothers Terranova.

Q. What did they say?

A. Be in New York to-morrow to appear in Court for the testimony of my brother.

Q. When was that sent to you? When did

you get the telegram? Was it a day or two before you came down?

A. Yes, but I came down at once. The first time I came I remained here two days. Not being called, and not being able to leave my business for such a long period, I rushed back to Rochester.

Q. When did you come down again?

A. One week later at the time the detectives were testifying.

Q. And you came down later? Did you go to your mother's house?

A. Yes.

Q. Whom did you see there?

A. Terranova, Nick Terranova.

Q. What did he say to you?

A. "I am very sorry to trouble you. I know what you are losing. I know that you are doing this for us, but it is absolutely necessary. You are in no danger at all"—he was all the time in the house—"there will be no danger for you; you will be all right."

Q. Did he tell you what you had to say?

A. He said, "How many times a week do you want to say that you saw him?" I answered

once a week. "I want to make my testimony as light as possible," I told him, "so as not to get into trouble with the Court." He said that once a week was probably too little; "make it twice a week," he said. And I said, if I remember rightly, I saw him twice a week.

Q. Did he tell you the time and the period?

A. He told me the period from the latter part of December to the early part of March. Of course I could not testify further than that.

Q. Was Dr. Brancato there?

A. I was all alone.

Terranova said to me that when his brother (Morello) comes out of the Tombs I was to tell him just what I was going to testify to in Court. This in order to keep Morello from getting mixed up in his testimony, and also for the additional purpose of keeping Morello's mind at ease in the courtroom. Terranova told me to come along with him, and he made me stand in the corner there until he (Morello) came out, and I was to say he had rheumatism.

Q. He said that; did Terranova tell Morello you were going to testify?

A. We had arranged that.



Q. When did you first see him?

A. When they were bringing him down from the Tombs to the courtroom.

Q. Did Terranova speak to Morello?

A. Yes. He first spoke to Morello.

Q. And he told him that you were willing to testify for that period?

A. Yes.

Q. Then what did you say to Morello?

A. "I am going to testify for you, that you had rheumatism for that period, from the latter part of December to the first part of March."

Q. Up to the time you left for Rochester?

A. Yes. He said, "Don't fear; we are out; there is no danger at all; you need not fear, and I tell you that I was not out of the house at all; nobody saw me and nobody will know the difference, because I was as pale as a ghost at the time."

Q. They did not know we had eight men watching them at the time—

A. I came the first time, was here two days and was not called; I hung around the Court and finally had to go back to Rochester and look after my business.

Q. When did you first see Dr. Brancato?

A. The second time I came down to New York.

Q. Did you know that he was going to testify too?

A. Terranova told me—

Q. What did he say?

A. "He is going to testify that you were in consultation." Terranova took me from the courthouse here to Dr. Brancato.

Q. That is Nick Terranova?

A. Yes.

Q. What did you do down in Brancato's office?

A. We simply agreed as to what we were going to say; that is the time Dr. Brancato told me "we are up against it."

Q. On the quiet?

A. On the quiet.

Q. Was Terranova there?

A. He was in the outside room.

Q. Did he tell you how you would fix it up—he did not treat Morello?

A. No. Morello was not sick; he had no rheumatism, but complained all the time of pains.

Q. Did Dr. Brancato tell you he had not treated him?

A. We did not argue about that. It was understood.

Q. It was understood that you had to swear falsely?

A. *Because we could not do otherwise!* So they came to me principally because I was his regular physician and they got Dr. Brancato—

Q. To come in after you went to Rochester?

A. I do not know what Dr. Brancato said.

Q. Do you know Maria Capellano; she is no relation to you?

A. Who?

Q. The trained nurse who said she treated him?

A. No.

Q. Do you know Gasparo Candido, the druggist on One Hundred and Forty-ninth Street, now at No. 23 New Bowery?

A. No.

Q. Did you ever have any conversation with Mrs. Morello?

A. No—the only conversation I had with her was—“Please do that for the love of the children; try and help my husband.”

Q. Where did you have that conversation?

A. She came to my house.

Q. You fixed the whole thing up with the Terranova boys?

A. With Nick.

Q. What happened after you got through testifying?

A. I rushed back to Rochester.

Q. Have you heard from them since you have been indicted?

A. My mother told the whole crowd that she would have nothing to do with them; didn't care what the consequences would be. She said: "You have ruined my son; the last good thing you have done for us." They said to her, "Don't worry, everything will be all right."

She said: "I don't care how it goes; I don't want to see you any more."

Q. Did you hear anything about the alibi that you were going to establish for Cecala?

A. I heard something when I was in the lawyer's office.

Q. Were you down in the lawyer's office at all?

A. Twice. He said: "What is your testimony to be?" I told him, and he said all right.

Q. The only lawyer you ever saw?

A. Yes.

Q. Terranova was the one who had all the conversation?

A. Nick, yes. He did the telegraphing.

Q. How did he sign the telegram?

A. Terranova.

Q. Did not sign Nicholas?

A. No, I don't think he did.

Q. He was down in Towns' <sup>1</sup> office?

A. He was; he never left me a minute.

Q. What conversation did you have with Ponticelli?

A. Only that I got there before he did. I was introduced to him here.

Q. By whom?

A. I do not recall.

Q. He is a friend of Morello's?

A. I think he was; lived downtown; they were neighbors.

Q. Did you not have a store up there? [Rochester.]

A. No. I went away from New York with a druggist.

Q. His name?

A. Bisconti. He went out there [Rochester] for the purpose of setting up a drug store,

<sup>1</sup> Mirabeau L. Towns, attorney for the gang.

and I to set up an office. Naturally, I would be doing business with him. If I had any patients he would fill out the prescriptions. We proposed to help one another. We could not set up the drug store right away, so I rented my office to him and kept some medicines there; and I wrote my prescriptions and told the patients that if they wanted they could have the prescriptions filled out right in the house. That thing did not work because people would pay one dollar for the visit to me and sixty or seventy cents for the medicine, and they thought it was a scheme. I told Bisconti that as we had come to Rochester together I would help him all I could to set up a drug store there. This was when we parted.

Q. How long have you known Bisconti?

A. About three months.

Q. Did any of the crowd ever give you checks to present at the bank?

A. No. Ponticelli has a store with three or four men working. He came to me and asked if I could do him a favor. I had been there only two or three months. He said that he was doing much business and that as I was not doing very much he requested me to go and cash a



check for him. It was for \$300 made out by Ponticelli himself.

Q. Did they ever discuss the counterfeit operations with you in any way?

A. No.

Q. The only thing you know about them is that they made you come down here and testify?

A. Yes.

Q. Did they threaten your mother?

A. No.

For making this statement, which shows up the methods whereby the "Black Handers" operated and tried to escape the punishment of the court for the offenses with which they were charged, Dr. Romano was allowed to go free after sentence was suspended.

Dr. Brancato, the other physician, was tried twice, once the jury disagreeing and the second time he was found not guilty.

I have no criticism of the action of the jury in Dr. Brancato's case. It is simply in line with the "fortunes of war" that the government was unable to land Dr. Brancato.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE "BLACK-HAND" TESTAMENT

ON the person of one Rudolpho Palermo—one of the henchmen of the Morello-Lupo band—we discovered a small black book closely written in the nebulous dialect of Sicily. This man was under arrest on the charge of dealing in spurious money of the United States and Canada. We felt sure we had in our grasp an important document. After some little coaxing Palermo finally confessed that the ominous looking little book contained the rules governing the actions of the "Black-Hand" Society.

Palermo is now serving a second sentence of six years in the Federal Penitentiary of Atlanta, Georgia.

The following is a translation from the Sicilian patois of the rules and articles found in the little black book—the bible of the "Black-Handers":

*First Article*—Whoever confides to other com-

panions, not belonging to the same society, the operations and movements of his associates, or offends a companion by word or deed, seriously or in fooling, or does not respect the recruits (who cannot be commanded for other than affairs of the society), or refuses to mount guard at his turn, or gets drunk or has a quarrel among companions, or when being called by a companion for business of the society refuses his service without justified motive, or leaves town for more than one day and does not let it be known to the society, is punishable by a fine of \$20 and cannot come back to his place. But his associates must be all of one accord, pro and con, in judging him guilty. In case one of the companions in the society departs, he must surrender to those remaining the power of his vote, or he must leave his address so that the society may notify him of a meeting in the case of new practice, when he will go to the place at the expense of the interested party. But if the punished party does not give proof of amending, he will be unfrocked—in all points remaining honored, however—unless he commits some infamy. Whenever the society is re-formed there must be an opinion of the judges as to who merits

his place, and who cannot come to his place, until a meeting of the same society of its own will takes place, without any one appealing to another body of the society.

*Second Article*—He who swears falsely on his submission, who draws a weapon against a companion without a weapon and one of the same dimensions (always an uncovered point) or pulls a revolver, or has a duel with any man of the same society without the permission of his superior, is unfrocked, roundly deprived of his rights, and he who protects him falls in disgrace without right of appealing to another body of the society.

*Third Article*—The companion who knows of an offense committed by an associate against the society, and does not report it to the society, falls under the same charge.

*Fourth Article*—He that does not come at the precise hour of meeting the blackmailers on the day set for duty will be punished without warning. If he gives an explanation acceptable to the society, he will be reinstated; otherwise, he will not participate at the next division of funds.

*Fifth Article*—A recruit is entitled to one-fifth of the spoils procured by or through him for the society.

*Sixth Article*—The society cannot proceed in any matter without the consent of all the companions; the opposition of a single vote is enough to dead-lock the proceedings, provided the reasons given by the dissenter are satisfactory and convincing to the society.

*Seventh Article*—If a companion arrives once the council is in session, his presence cannot alter the agreements entered into.

*Eighth Article*—Every meeting called is to be known to those on duty that day, at least twenty-four hours beforehand, except in unusual cases.

*Ninth Article*—It is to the disposition exclusively of the head of the society to establish the place and day of meeting without objection.

## CHAPTER XXI

### "THE VERMILION FLOWER ON THE BIG TOE"

Q. WHERE have you acquired the S? [The by-laws.]

A. Under the Cedar Plains, and passing from the hole of the Beanstalk, I saw three lamps lighted and one in the center that could hardly stand.

Q. Who has formed the plan of S?

A. Fernando Misprizzi.

Q. Is he dead or alive?

A. He lives always, even after the end of the world.

Q. Since when have you acquired the Sgarro?

A. Since the scientific tree was planted in the hole.

Q. With what is the hole covered?

A. With a very fine carpet where the '(Ca-morristis) blackmailers play.

Q. What is enclosed in this hole?



A. The Penny of Crime denied, fought for, and regained.

Q. How do you demonstrate crime?

A. Give me a sheet of paper and you will see.

Q. What does the head of crime wear?

A. A silk handkerchief with five knots and the Penny denied, fought for, and regained.

Q. How many weapons are there?

A. Thirteen. Five knives — four pairs and one separate, five packs of cards, three of which are for the ordinary blackmailing and two for the blackmailing of the experienced; stiletto, small tapper, and razor.

Q. Where have you drawn? (blood).

A. From the right thumb of the right hand.

Q. What does an experienced blackmailer bear?

A. A star in front of him (on his forehead) and a vermilion flower on the big toe of the left foot.

Q. How many kinds of blackmail are there?

A. Three—ordinary blackmail that becomes all blackmailers by turn, bold blackmail which is “that denied, fought for, and regained,” and

high blackmail that belongs to the supreme initiated blackmailers.

Q. What does a highly initiated blackmailer especially bear?

A. A pair of small scissors, a silver needle, pins, cotton and taffeta.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE GENTLE ART OF WRITING "BLACK-HAND" LETTERS

THE reader, being now on the "inside" with us, I hope the extracts of the "black-hand" letters given here will convey some meaning.

When we had our net closely drawn about the band of counterfeitters led by Lupo and Morello, we raided the homes of the various members of the gang. It fell to the lot of operative T. G. Gallagher to be among those of our men who entered Morello's home and placed the leader under arrest.

In this case, the diaper wrapped about the body of Morello's baby attracted the experienced eye of operative Gallagher. The moment Gallagher broke into the room where Mrs. Morello was nursing her baby he noticed that Mrs. Morello tucked something away in the diaper of the infant. The mother fingered the cloth rather nervously.

Gallagher suggested to Mrs. Morello that there might be something of interest to the government wrapped in the cloth that protected the little Morello, and instantly the mother became very emphatic in her native manner of making us understand that she “no understand.”

Gallagher is a man of Irish extraction from the environs of Boston. In other words, he has the humorous instinct. So he suggested that maybe the poor baby needed a fresh diaper! There was a flash of volcanic fire in the mother’s eye as two strong arms held her secure while Gallagher removed the cloth from the infant’s limbs and exposed the letters, copies of which are here given.

The letters concern the admittance into the society of a man who is questioned by the leaders in New York, and who in turn puts the responsibility for his admittance up to the Chicago gang. Black borders adorn both the envelopes and the paper upon which the writer had scribbled his tale. The first of these letters is addressed to Mr. Rosario Dispenza, No. 147 Milton Avenue, Chicago, Ill., and is from G. La Bella Morello, No. 2069 Second Avenue, New York.

“DEAR FRIEND:

“In answer to your letter that bears date of the 10th, I hear what you say in it. Regarding the Council, you have no right to be present in the meetings. The Council is divided and separated from the Assembly. But in case that some Councilman wishes to be present in some meeting of the Assembly, he can come but only to hear and then has no right to the floor, neither right to an opinion or right to vote.

“Have I explained myself?

“This is for your guidance. Now regarding Calogero Constantino. To tell you the truth, I have as yet been unable to persuade myself as to what it is about, the letters to me have not been satisfying or convincing. There should have been better explanations. In this manner I cannot answer with exact judgment and clear conscience. I cannot understand how it is that Calogero Constantino remains arrested at Bacaluse, Louisiana, while under the protection of so many good friends engaged incessantly to make him obtain his liberty, and you others of Chicago have all this contract on your side.

“I have said it more than once that I and my townsmen have always known the Constantino

family as a good family, and none other but very good, and the boss of my town, I am sure, cannot give you better details, though I doubt if they knew this family just because they were not to our bearing, but nevertheless leaning towards good people; have you seen ‘the ox, neither white nor black,’ this is their bearing. But not for this I repeat, always of good people; there have been born at times people that had given a good account of their being, honored and respected as always.

“We of Corleone have never had any dealings with them, therefore could not try them and appreciate their merits. Others that have had dealings, that is to say have known their good merits, and have brought them to make part of our family. Nothing extraordinary, because certainly would not have brought them in this land if they had not known their good merits. They have done well. We, of Corleone, will appreciate said doings.

“In your letter you tell me that regarding Calogero Constantino there is nothing to say, but there should be exact information, because there are eight good workers sick to put the work on him and of the eight persons there are those



in danger of their lives. But you must excuse me if I and others have not understood such language.

"If you know that Constantino is of good health, also he is severely of good health, you will take with other townsmen of yours the responsibility here and also of the town, and we will do everything. Neither I nor others here can understand how you ever in your wise thinking write us in this manner. If I have written to you more than once that this Constantino family have never been to our hearing. Known to us only by sight in America as in the town, and then this is not enough. You surely should not ignore the fact Calogero Constantino has been missing from New York at least six years.

"Now, then, I ask you why you write me and others to assume the responsibility of said individual; if this party could be admitted, then we assume the responsibility of an individual that had been seen 'neither born nor raised' and who has never been known by name or sight. This responsibility you should ask of others, not us. You see in this that I was right in resenting De Vito Casiaferro and Enea, and saying that it is

not done that way, in making a person, by not asking information of the townsmen before making it, that all these discussions now would not have been.

"Now you must ask them to assume the responsibility, those that have made him, not us. Of us you must ask only if we have anything to say. This, yes, is very correct. But to assume responsibility is one thing, and asking if we have anything to say is another thing. There is a great difference. Therefore, we go in Court, we have undersigned, upon our conscience and on our honor declare of having nothing to say upon the conduct and honor of Calogero Constantino, not regarding him only but also of his family. All of Corleone. Giuseppe La Bella and brother, Vincenzo, brother Ciro and brother Coco.

"PAOLO FRISELLA,

"GAETANO LOMONTE,

"STEFANO LASALA,

"FORTUNATO LO MONTE,

"ANTONIO RIZZO,

"MICHALE CONIGLIO,

"ANGELO VALENTI,

"FRANCESCO MOSCATO."

This letter was, of course, written in the Sicilian dialect, and was translated into the foregoing "English," which, the reader will notice, is not quite the "Queen's own." But the translation was made close to the Sicilian, and we must take it as we get it.

The reader will, of course, see that Constantino's admittance to the brotherhood is in doubt. That is, he is not being accepted into the society except upon the responsibility of the Chicago crowd. Whatever help is to be given him in his trouble in Louisiana, where he is under arrest, must come from the Chicago brethren. Help will come from New York, perhaps, in the last extreme. This seems to be the burden of the letter.

Another letter follows which may also help the reader to a conclusion as to whether such a thing exists as a "Black-Hand" Society. The letter is addressed to Mr. Vincenzo Moreci, No. 535 S. Franklin Street, New Orleans, La. It is dated New York, November 15th, 1909, and reads as follows:

"DEAR FRIEND:

"Am in possession of your two letters, one

that bears date of the 5th, the other on the 10th of November. I understand the contents.

“In regard to being able to reorganize the family, for me I advise you all to do it because it seems it is not just to stay without a king nor country, but I authorize you to convey to all my humble prayer and my weak opinion, but well understood, that those that are worthy and those that wish to belong, those that do not wish to belong let them go.

“You tell me that from Palermo arrived good news. I nor the others of New York have not been formally advised, therefore I beg of you tell me something about the news from Palermo. Who has written and whether any commission has decided to come? I have advised my godfather La Gatutte to have in sight the one from Morriale. I advise you further that in your last letter I understood minutely and by wire, and sign the affair of the friend Vincenzo Antinoro. It is well now we are well understood. Now for the present the most interesting thing that I desire and expect is the declaration (statement) of Giovanni Gulotta regarding the affair Constantino and Trombone declaration made and signed by his own hands of Giovanni Gu-

lotta, and then if we are there it's a wonder.

"I hear in your letter that Sunday three friends left to go and see him. I will await patiently the answer and hope for favorable results. Am in doubt that one of my letters may be lost, because, as I had to say in a previous one to the last, I had spoken also of the agreement I had made with Calogero Gulotta. In fact, he told me in this his last that in no other letter of mine had he understood what I said.

"I end this moment by sending you the most cordial greetings of mine and my family to you with all your family and pray you make it known also to the friend Zito, Piro, Sunsseri, Benanti and their families as also Vito Di Giorgi.

"They will also receive many greetings of my brothers and brothers-in-law and my son Calidu, my godfather Angelo La Gatutte and all the friends of merit. Many greetings yet from all the friends of New Orleans that you think. To you a warm kiss. Your affectionate friend,

"(Signed) G. LA BELLA. (Morello.)"

## CHAPTER XXIII

### FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS FOR A BADLY WRITTEN LETTER

THE value of these letters to the gang, and the peculiar information revealed in them to the Secret Service, prompted the "Black-Hand" crowd to get together a fund of \$500, which was offered by one of the crowd to a man now attached to the New York Police Department. With this money the gang intended to bribe this man to get the letters and return them to Mrs. Morello. Until this man, who was then a member of the police department and a detective, reads this, he will not suspect that I even knew of the offer.

There were other letters containing information of very valuable character to the Secret Service.

Now, when the arrest was made, the news spread through East One Hundred and Sixth Street, where Morello was living, and some of



the scouts brought the information to Nick Terranova, a half-brother of Morello. Terranova thereupon rushed down to Milone's grocery store at No. 235 East Ninety-seventh Street to notify the members of the gang who might be there that Giuseppe had been placed under arrest.

There was a surprise coming to Nick when he discovered a number of Secret Service men in charge of the store, and the members of the gang taken away by the government's officers. He tried to act an imbecile, and pretended not to understand English when asked for a reason for his coming into the store. He was as communicative as the proverbial oyster.

At the time when Morello was arrested he was in bed with his son. Under the pillow of each was found a large revolver. Neither father nor son, it is needless to say, were given the opportunity to reach the weapons. The son has since been murdered.

And now that we are on the subject of letters I might relate that when the members of the gang discovered Comito had confessed what he knew of the counterfeiting scheme, they tried to locate Comito, who had been hidden by me.

They tried a number of ruses in their efforts to locate him for the purpose, presumably, of murdering him.

One of their efforts was characteristic: Secret Service operative Rubano was thought by the gang to be the man who was communicating with Comito by mail. This was presumed by the gang without foundation. However, it was enough for the gang to feel that this was the way in which I was keeping in touch with Comito. Here is what happened:

Don Gasparo had a drug store at No. 23 New Bowery, where he also had a branch post office and received letters there for a number of the "Black-Hand" crowd. Some one wrote to the postmaster of New York, on a change of address card, and asked the postmaster to have all of Pietro Rubano's mail sent to No. 23 New Bowery.

Now you must sign your own name to the card asking for this change. So there was the difficulty of getting Rubano's signature to the card without his knowing it. That was easy for the writer. He forged Rubano's name on the signature line of the card. The gang was elated.

They would now get the "Squealer" Comito's letters to the Secret Service and locate and destroy the traitor.

But, like the plans of the little field mouse of whom Robert Burns wrote, the best laid schemes "gang aft agley."

I asked Rubano if he had made the request of the post office to have his mail addressed to the New Bowery place, and the detective told me it was news to him.

Then information came to me about Gasparo, and I found that the druggist had good reasons to stand in with Morello. He had formerly run a drug store up in the Bronx in the near neighborhood of Lupo and Morello's real estate venture and was a fast friend of Morello. In fact, he and Morello were co-workers in enterprises that do not propagate peace on earth and good will among men.

We started to lay a trap for Gasparo. I sent a number of letters from different parts of the country addressed to Rubano at the Custom House, New York, knowing that they would be forwarded to the New Bowery address.

The letters were placed in large envelopes of different and pronounced color and easily distin-

guishable to the eye when placed in the letter "R" box in Gasparo's branch post office.

Then I set Secret Service men to watch those who called for mail and to shadow any one calling for the large colored envelopes.

This scheme of mine did not work out, though, to any fruitful end because of the failure of any of the gang to call for the envelopes with Rubano's name on them. A number of the gang had gone in and out of the drug store for days, but not one took away any of the large colored envelopes. Either they were afraid to take the chance or some suspicious circumstance warned them off when at the post office window. Such things as a strange man passing and looking into the drug store, or the appearance of a stranger in the neighborhood, might have been sufficient reason for the member who started for the letters to refrain from asking for them at the last moment. These Morello-Lupo members are very suspicious, and in dealing with them this trait must always be considered.

Another incident of the efforts of the gang to locate Comito may be of interest at this point when I relate that the gang offered \$2,500 to any one who would reveal to the "Black-

Handers" the whereabouts of Comito. This \$2,500 was offered to the same member of the New York Police Department who was also offered \$500 for the return of the letters, two of which I have given a few pages back.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### METHODS OF BLACKMAILING

A THREATENING letter is sent to a proposed victim. Immediately after the letter is delivered by the postman Morello just "happens" to be in the vicinity of the victim to be, and "accidentally" meets the receiver of the letter.

The receiver knows of Morello's close connections with Italian malefactors, and, the thing being fresh in mind, calls Morello's attention to the letter.

Morello takes the letter and reads it. He informs the receiver that victims are not killed off without ceremony and just for the sake of murder.

The "Black-Hand" chief himself declares he will locate the man who sent the letter, if such a thing is possible, the victim never suspecting that the letter is Morello's own. Of course, the letter is never returned to the proposed victim. By this cunning procedure no evidence re-



mains in the hand of the receiver of the letter should he wish to seek aid from the police.

Also, Morello is in this way put in close touch with the mental attitude of the receiver of the letter, and he is in a position to tell whether the receiver will go to the police or not.

Morello thus can tell whether to proceed with further threats; he can also tell what manner of threat is most likely to persuade the receiver of the letter to part with his money.

The threat may be the stealing of his little child or the blowing up of his store or the horrible invitation to expect swift and sudden death from a knife thrust in the dark.

Morello was practically the first man to make this manner of blackmail a commercial success in this country.

Here are a few samples of letters taken by the Secret Service men from Morello's house when he was arrested on the charges upon which he was convicted of counterfeiting United States money. It was for these letters also that the offer of \$500 was made in part.

The letter which follows had been sent through the mail to Liborio Bataglia, at No. 13 Prince Street, New York City. Morello had got the

letter back in the usual way that I have just explained. It reads in the English translation from the Sicilian as follows:

“MR. BATAGLIA:

“Do not think that we are dead. Look out for your face; a veil won't help you. Now is the occasion to give me five hundred dollars on account of that which you others don't know respect that from then to now you should have kissed my forehead I have been in your store, friend Donate how you respect him he is an ignorant boob, that I bring you others I hope that all will end that when we are alone they give me no peace as I deserve time lost that brings you will know us neither some other of the Mafia in the future will write in the bank where you must send the money without so many stories otherwise you will pay for it.”

Here is another letter that had been sent through the mails and obtained by Morello in the usual manner. It bears a Brooklyn postmark and is dated September 21, 1908. It was addressed to Rosario Oliveri, 27 Stanton Street. It reads in the translation from the Sicilian:

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“DEAR FRIEND:

“Beware we are sick and tired of writing to you to the appointment you have not come with people of honor. If this time you don’t do what we say it will be your ruination. Send us three hundred dollars with people of honor at eleven o’clock Thursday night. There will be a friend at the corner of 15th Street and Hamilton Ave. He will ask you for the signal. Give me the word and you will give him the money. Beware that if you don’t come to this order we will ruin all your merchandise and attempt your life. Beware of what you do. M. N.”

Here is a polite invitation to a proposed victim that he very kindly dispense with his money. It reads:

“FRIEND:

“The need obliges us to come to you in order to do us a favor. We request, Sunday night, 7th day, at 12 o’clock you must bring the sum of \$1000. Under penalty of death for you and your dears you must come under the new bridge near the Grand Street ferry where you will find the person that wants to know the time. At this

word you will give him the money. Beware of what you do and keep your mouth shut. . . .”

I summoned a great many of the people to whom these letters were sent and asked them to tell who they met and how much money they gave to the “Black-Handers.” But invariably these people, some of whom I knew were victims, would deny that they had met any person in answer to the letter, and they would also deny that they ever thought of giving any money to appease the wrath of the “Black-Hand” Society.

## CHAPTER XXV

### TRACING A LETTER

WHILE I was hot on the trail of the counterfeiting gang led by Lupo and Morello, a letter came to my hand which contained a counterfeit five-dollar note. The letter was addressed to Andrea Pollara, Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, Canada. The letter was written in Italian and translated was as follows:

“DEAR FRIEND:

“I enclose a sample of those for \$5 and beg you buy five cents of Griciria (the “black-hand” word for glycerine) which if rubbed on certain counterfeit bills will give them the appearance of age, and so make them the more easy to pass, and rub it on your hands, and then you will do whatever you want. If you see they will go well, notify me at once and I will send you as many as you want.”

The note was signed I. P. It was a registered letter and sealed with black wax by a stamp seal bearing the name of F. Acritelli, No. 243 Elizabeth Street. The return address on this letter was Giuseppe Conti, No. 8 Prince Street, New York City. The letter also showed that it had been mailed at Sub-Station No. 78, which is in the Italian bank conducted by Pasquale Pati, at No. 240 Elizabeth Street, just across the street from where the letter had been sealed at Acritelli's banking place. This Acritelli, by the way, is the father of the former Coroner Acritelli.

The initials on the signature of the letter, I guessed were those of Pietro Inzarillo. This man conducted a little Italian café at No. 226 Elizabeth Street, in the same block where Acritelli's bank was, and also in the same block where the sub-post office station was located where the letter had been registered. Also, I knew that this Inzarillo was just around the corner from the grocery store of Lupo, at No. 8 Prince Street; and in the back of Lupo's café, Morello conducted his Italian restaurant.

I examined the five-dollar counterfeit bill and



saw that it was the work of the Lupo-Morello gang.

Then, too, the return address, No. 8 Prince Street, was where Morello and Lupo were doing business. The problem was how to connect these two fellows with the writing of the letter. It had been rejected when brought back there by the letter carrier.

I hit upon the plan of finding out whether the handwriting was that of Lupo, which I had reason to believe it was. I remembered that several of the Lupo-Morello gang were in the Tombs awaiting trial for counterfeiting. I knew that many of their friends applied to United States Marshal Henkel for passes to visit the members of the gang locked up. Two of these were Isadore Crocervera and Giuseppe DePriema. The latter, by the way, was the brother-in-law of the man found murdered in the barrel.

I went to Marshal Henkel and told him what I was after, and made arrangements with him to get the handwriting of all those who called and asked for passes to see the two Morello-Lupo counterfeitters. So whenever the visiting members called at the marshal's office and asked for passes the marshal pretended that he did not

understand and had the visitors write out what they wished and required them to sign the request for passes. In this way I obtained the signature and handwriting of a number of the gang, but failed in the main purpose, namely, that of obtaining a sample of Lupo's handwriting or his signature.

Despite the fact that I was satisfied that the workmanship of the bill was that of the Lupo-Morello crowd, and though I was confident that Lupo wrote the letter, yet when the letter was returned to No. 8 Prince Street nobody there would accept it for Giuseppe Conti, the information to the letter carrier being that no such person lived there or was known there. When you know the ways of the Sicilian criminal this occurrence alone is good grounds for believing that a great deal more was known about Giuseppe Conti at the Prince Street address than was given to the letter carrier.

I hit upon another plan. I knew that Lupo was importing into this country a large quantity of olive oil, which had to pass the government officials. Accordingly, I went to see John Hughes, brother of former Inspector of Police Edward Hughes, who was at one time in charge

of the Detective Bureau at Police Headquarters. I told Hughes what I wanted. He was in the Custom's service.

Hughes brought it about so that the consignment of olive oil to Lupo was held up, compelling Lupo himself to write out a list of the goods he desired to have admitted over his personal signature. The statement was then taken to a handwriting expert and also the letter containing the counterfeit five-dollar bill was placed at the disposal of the expert, who declared that the handwriting of the letter and that of the statement written by Lupo for his consignment of olive oil was one and the same.

Now I had established a connecting link that would stand the test of the courts. But there were many other things about the letter that led me to go further before making any allegation against the wily Lupo.

It occurred to me it might be well to know why the letter had been sent away out to a railroad camp in Portage La Prairie. I got men to work on that end of the case. We found that Andrea Pollara was a laborer in a railroad camp at the address to which the letter had been sent. Further, it was established that Andrea Pollara

was the agent of the gang in the camp where a number of Italians were employed mending and building spurs on the railroad. He had been sent there to investigate and see whether it was a profitable place in which to distribute some of the spurious bills. Additional information disclosed the fact that the railroad camp had moved and the letter having been addressed to Portage La Prairie, and not being called for, was returned to the address written on the back, Giuseppe Conti, No. 8 Prince Street. This cleared up in my mind the reasons for the letter being sent to the Canadian railroad camp and also the cause of its being returned.

Other little connecting links were established over which I was building a bridge to Lupo in his Italian grocery store. It came to my mind that Lupo had done quite some business with Banker Acritelli, and Lupo was also on more than familiar terms with Banker Pati. I knew that Lupo and Inzarillo were very friendly. It was found that the man to whom the letter had been addressed to in Canada was not Andrea Pollara. This was an assumed name. The right name of the "Black-Hander" was Salvatore Maccari, who had a wife living in New

York City. The net of evidence was closing on Lupo.

While I was gathering the threads together, the tragedy of the barrel murder came to public notice. While the police of New York were groping around in the dark, I submitted information of which I have spoken previously in this book, and the arrest of a number of the gang for the murder of the victim in the barrel followed. Among those arrested was Lupo. When he was placed in custody his house was searched, and the following letter, written in Italian, was found. It was postmarked Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, Canada, addressed to Pietro Inzarillo, No. 226 Elizabeth Street, New York City, dated September 4, 1902, and translated reads:

“DEAR FRIEND:

“By the present I give you the news of my good health and of all the friends who are with me, and so we hope to hear from you and all the friends in New York, whom we respect. Meantime, I beg of you warmly to tell me when the goods arrive, and to send me the samples of a five in order to see whether we can do business, prompt answer and samples. I and all the



friends salute you together with the friends over in New York, I am your friend Andrea Pollara. My address is the following, Mr. Andrea Pollara, Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, Canada. P. S. Dear Paolo, I beg of you to send me five dollars you or Ignazio (meant for Ignazio Lupo) that as soon as I get my money I will return them to you, nothing else, I am your friend 'Salvatore Matisi.' Be so kind as to put them in the letter of your friend, I am sure you will favor me."

The reader will not require much taxing of his thinking powers to realize that the returned letter containing the counterfeit \$5.00 note was written in response to the above letter.

When Lupo was searched we found another clue. A note book was found on him in which the following entry is recorded:

"S. Matisi, sent to Canada \$5.00—to his wife \$5.00—ditto \$4.00."

Opposite this entry, that is, on the opposite page in the note book, is written:

"The name Matisi is mentioned a number of times in this book as are also the names of a



number of counterfeiters including Isadore Crocervera and Giuseppe DePriema."

These entries were taken to a handwriting expert who declared that the handwriting was the same as that in the letter which I started tracing after its return here from Portage La Prairie. These entries, however, were in English, and I may note here that Lupo wrote English.

Twelve of the gang were arrested by the New York police when they rounded up the crowd incident to the barrel murder. Among those arrested with Lupo was Pietro Inzarillo. When the latter was arrested, his café at No. 226 Elizabeth Street was searched and a letter from Mac-cari was found. The letter was postmarked Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, Canada, dated September 1st, 1902, and addressed to Pietro Inzarillo, alias Saitta (Lupo's full name being Ignazio Lupo Saitta), Elizabeth Street, New York. The rest of the address is illegible. The letter reads:

"Canada Pacife, August 31, 1902.

"DEAR FRIEND:

"With these few words I come to make you a note of my perfect health, the same I hope to

hear from you, you brothers also, I desire to know how your father has been; therefore I recommend to you that affair that I left in your charge. If my Uncle Thomas comes from Ebghostien, do not forget the affair that is the direction that you have given to Carmino, do not let it go up in the air. As soon as possible that you can, make it. Nothing else to tell you. Give my regards to Paolo Marchese, regards to Giuseppe Morello and John Pecorain and all the friends that ask for me, with the best of regards to you, I say your dear friend 'Salvatore Matisi' accept the regards from Carmelo Blandina. This is the direction—Salvatore Maccari, P. O. Portage La Prairie Manitoba, Canada."

No comment is necessary concerning the letter. It speaks for itself as another thread in the net I was weaving.

It did not take agents of the Secret Service long to "pick up" Maccari. He was not aware of the fact that he was under surveillance for some time prior to May 2, of 1902, when he was placed under arrest at his home in No. 701½ James Street, New York City. When his apartments were searched agents of the service

looked under Maccari's bed and found letters written from Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, Canada, and signed Salvatore Maccari. These letters were addressed to Maccari's wife, and contained what is termed "rivetting" evidence. Also, there were letters from his wife to Maccari and addressed to him at Portage La Prairie.

When placed under arrest Maccari at first denied that he knew either Lupo or Inzarillo, and proved to be a proverbial Italian at giving information to the police. He would not admit that he had ever seen or heard of either of the two men. He knew nothing about the counterfeit money, and had never even seen any spurious bills either in this country or in Italy. He made the sign of the cross and called on the saints to prove the truth of his lying statements. He declared that he could not read, neither could he write.

Later on he admitted that he was intimately acquainted with Lupo and that Lupo's father and his father were great friends in Italy for years and that both families were life-long friends. He also admitted that he was well acquainted with Inzarillo. He also declared that

the letters were written by a friend and signed at his, Maccari's, dictation. And more evidence was ferreted out.

The water mark in the billheads used by Lupo in his grocery business was identical with that in the letter sent to Portage La Prairie, and having on it the return address of Giuseppe Conti, No. 8 Prince Street. The envelope upon which the return address was written was the same make as the envelopes found in the café of Inzarillo when that place was searched following Inzarillo's arrest in connection with the barrel murder.

On October 24, 1902, a registered letter addressed to Andrea Pollara, with the return address P. Inzarillo and Giglio, was returned to Lupo at his residence, No. 433 West Fortieth Street. Pollara could not be located in the Canadian camp and so the letter came back. Lupo signed the receipt for the returned letter. The handwriting was the same as in the instances already related wherein the "Black Handers" scribbling was identified by an expert.

I will not weary the reader with further efforts along this line of reaching one of the big chiefs

of the gang as he stood far in the background, certain of his immunity from any connection in a legal sense with the distributor of the money his brain had planned to build up his fortune on.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### “BLACK-HAND” PROPAGANDA

THE method followed in enlisting Antonio Schiavi into the service of the gang affords a typical example of the cunning, watchful procedure of the Lupo-Morello secret propaganda, which was in a fair way to become of world-wide scope. A gang member, Giuseppe Gudo, managed to send Schiavi to a drug store where he was sure to meet Antonio Miloni.<sup>1</sup>

Schiavi tells of leaving Rio de Janeiro about February 23, 1909, on the steamship *Gunther*, and arriving in New York in the middle of February of the same year. While on shipboard he became acquainted with Giuseppe Gudo, a tailor of Newark, New Jersey. After striking up a friendly acquaintance with Gudo Schiavi says, and telling Gudo that he was a litho-engraver,

<sup>1</sup> Miloni was Treasurer of the Ignatz Florio Co-Operative Association. He was indicted and confessed. He is now in Italy a fugitive from justice.



Bono sent him to the drug store of Mocito, at No. 20 Broome Street, where Schiavi was to ask for Giuseppe Carlino, another litho-engraver who would get employment in New York for Schiavi.

Schiavi never met any Carlino, he says, but Gudo had spoken about him (Schiavi), the latter learned at the drug store. Accordingly, Schiavi continued to go to the Mocito store and remained there for a half day at a time in the hope of meeting Gudo. He was unsuccessful in this, though, but often met Cecala at the drug store. One day Cecala spoke to him, Schiavi says, and suggested that with a little money<sup>e</sup> he (Schiavi) could start in a profitable business.

Cecala never said much more concerning this business venture, though, to Schiavi, but one day Cecala made a further suggestion that Schiavi might help a certain man learn the photo-engraving business. This man, according to Cecala, had been in the bicycle business, but had given up this enterprise and was looking around for employment that promised to be more remunerative.

Finally, one day at the drug store, he was introduced to Antonio B. Miloni by Cecala who

told Schiavi that Miloni was the man of whom Cecala had been speaking and who wanted to learn the photo-engraving business.

Schiavi and Miloni had an extended conversation, and Schiavi agreed to go to the home of Miloni and teach him the business. Then for about six weeks or two months Schiavi went to the home of Miloni daily, and taught the “Black Handers” the essentials of the photo-engraving business. At the end of that time, according to Schiavi, Miloni discovered that he could proceed by himself and announced to Schiavi that he (Miloni) had joined the photo-engravers’ union.

About a year or so after this, Schiavi says he met Miloni on Third Avenue near One Hundred and Fourteenth Street, and Miloni was on his way home. The latter had in his possession, Schiavi says, a camera and all the necessities for photographing. Also, Schiavi says, Miloni took him along to a photo-engraving supply store at No. 103 Mott Street, where the “Black Handers” bought several kinds of the supplies necessary to the photo-engraving business.

Schiavi then tells of making a rendezvous of the Mocito drug store after this incident. He met a man in the drug store by the name of Don

Ciccio (Francesco) who made the drug store a camping place. This Don Ciccio posed as being in the real estate business and declared that he was an agent. What manner of agent he was, Schiavi says, Don Ciccio never made clear. This same Don Ciccio, according to Schiavi, once asked him whether he were able to make plates for money. Schiavi informed the real estate man that he could make the plates, but preferred his liberty to a term in the confines of a jail. Miloni was present during the conversation between Schiavi and Don Ciccio, according to Schiavi, but Miloni did not enter into the conversation. There were others who frequented the drug store and who were identified by Schiavi as members of the gang now imprisoned on the charges of counterfeiting.

In many ways, too numerous to relate, information of this sort came to me until the Secret Service was facing the onerous task of digesting and coördinating it for its special needs to keep the legal tender of the country secure.

The subtle, round-about manner in which the "Black Hand" scatters the seeds of his propaganda so that they will grow and bear fruit of themselves and disarm suspicion is well-illus-

trated in the way in which the attempt was made to inveigle Schiavi.

Corleone is the home town of Morello and Lupo, the arch-plotters. It is a place fascinating to the eye of the artist. Nestling at the foot of Mount Cardellia, in the province of Palermo, Sicily, it lies about two thousand feet above sea-level and seems to be sailing in the clouds like a phantom city of the Middle Ages.

Corleone means Lion-Heart. *Korliun* it was named by the Saracens, who founded it and made it a military stronghold in the picturesque thirteenth century. Something of the savage, marauding spirit of the Saracen, always a menace to civilization, hovers about the place—a savagery that has nursed into being a dangerous and powerful arm of the great Mafia or “Black-Hand” Society of Italy. The town holds only about twenty thousand inhabitants and there is no industry to speak of. Palermo is but twenty-one miles to the north of it. There is a splendid old church in Corleone reminiscent of the time when King Frederick II colonized these parts with Lombardian peasants as early as 1237.

One night in the year 1889, while on his way

home, Giovanni Vella, Chief of the Sylvan Guards, was murdered in a dark street but a short distance from his residence in Corleone. A bullet had torn its way through his back and into his lung. Vella lasted but a few minutes after the shooting, but long enough to cause a nasty tangle for the police in their effort to solve the murder. Vella lived just long enough to utter a few remarks that were misused by Mafia influences to send an innocent man to prison for twenty-two years.

Anna Di Puma, a neighbor, returning to her house at that hour had just passed through a dark alley and noticed two men lurking in the shadow. She passed close and looked into their faces, recognizing one of the men as Giuseppe Morello, whom she knew very well.

A couple of minutes later, even before she had reached her door, she heard a shot and ran back into the alley. There she found Vella lying in the exact spot where she had seen Morello and his companion apparently hiding but a few minutes previously. Anna Di Puma told the neighbors what she had seen. She was also incautious enough to say that she was going to

court to tell on the witness stand just what she had observed.

Anna Di Puma was shot in the back and killed two days later while she was sitting on the doorstep of a neighbor's store.

Morello was arrested and charged with the murder of the Di Puma woman. He was held in prison to await trial, but powerful influences of the Mafia were set to work and Morello was discharged for lack of evidence. The only witness to the murder of Vella was dead. Two lawyers of his band testified that Morello was in Palermo with them and not in Corleone on the night the Di Puma woman was murdered.

Michele Guarino Zangara, living in the next apartment to Morello, who noticed when the “Black Hander” arrived home and overheard the conversation that followed between Morello and his mother, was also murdered. He was thrown off a bridge one night while on his way home. He was found the next morning under the bridge dead. This man Zangara had gone to the accused man's house, three or four days after the Chief of the Sylvan Guards was murdered, and told the family of the man unjustly arrested



for the crime that he (Guarino) had overheard Mrs. Morello say to her son:

"Peppe, what have you done? Now they will come and arrest you," and in response to this Morello said, "Shut up, mother, they have gone on the wrong scent."

Zangara, being a man with a large family, feared to tell what he knew because he felt sure that Morello would murder him just as he had slain the Di Puma woman. However, when the accused man, Francesco Ortonello, was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment, Zangara came to the front, declaring that his conscience troubled him to see an innocent man sent away for the murder of Vella. He went to the authorities and told them that he was willing to risk his life and tell the truth for Ortonello. The authorities told Zangara that it would have been better had he told it during the trial. Now it was too late.

A few days after this the murder of Zangara took place.

Morello was on his way to America at this time, but the "Black Hand" had many powerful friends still watchful for his interests, and some of these attended to Zangara.

Pietro Milone, a police officer who tried hard to clear Ortonello, was murdered one night on his way home. The one who slew the officer was never punished.

Biaggia Milone lived across the way from the spot where Morello and his companion were seen hiding, and this woman subsequently admitted she saw the shooting and that Morello did it.

This woman is now in New York, and is the cousin of Domenico Milone, who conducted the grocery store at No. 235 East Ninety-seventh Street, which was the headquarters and distributing plant for the Lupo-Morello counterfeit money. The Milone woman has even stated publicly that she would not testify to what she knows in behalf of Ortonello in an effort to get the old man out of prison where, she says, she knows he is unjustly kept!

Ortonello's father, who tried to have his son freed, was threatened with death several times, and several shots were actually fired at him while the old man sat in his own doorway. The marksmanship was not good and the old man escaped the bullets.

While Morello was in prison charged with murdering the Di Puma woman he met Or-

tonello in the prison. Morello admitted to Ortonello that he had murdered Vella, the chief of the Sylvan Guards, for which crime Ortonello was there in the prison awaiting trial. Morello also informed Ortonello that if he and all his family did not care to join Vella in the world to come that the whole family had better be careful of what they said and what charges they made, and that any evidence tending to show his (Morello's) complicity in the crime must be suppressed.

In order that the reader may view the foregoing facts in proper perspective it will be necessary for me to relate a little of the politics and the relation of the so-called Mafia to the murders.

Vella, the murdered chief, was a very active and knowing man. He had dug up a great amount of evidence against the criminal band of which Morello was a member, and which was under the leadership of a very wealthy and powerful young man named Paolino Streva.

Vella had sworn in public that he would put this band out of business in and around Corleone. He also had decided to place Morello under surveillance, which means that Morello would have to be home every night at a certain time and sub-

ject to be called at any hour of the night by the police who would see whether he was behaving himself. Also, Morello would be compelled to make reports of his whereabouts and conduct and what work he was at to Vella whenever the chief should require it.

In return for the stand Vella had taken Morello swore publicly that he would be avenged on Vella for this punishment.

Vella also knew of the extensive criminal operations of Streva and that Morello was Streva's trusted lieutenant. Vella knew that Streva had a great deal of influence with judges and other public officials and even boasted that certain senators in Rome would do his bidding. Through this influence Streva managed to get out of prison a number of thieves, murderers and blackguards who in turn would go to any extremes for Streva. By crooked politics and sometimes by fear Streva exerted a baneful influence over the community the same as his uncle had done before him, the uncle who had handed down the wealth and political power that the younger man enjoyed. All these things were well known to Vella.

A further circumstance must be related here.

During the latter part of 1889, a large number of cattle had been stolen in the neighborhood of Corleone and the country people were making many complaints. Vella had been working on the case, and succeeded in rounding up facts and evidence sufficient to strike a telling blow at the Streva-Morello team and the rest of the Mafia crowd. The chief was contemplating a raid on the gang. The Streva crowd, however, were tipped off that the arrest orders were about to be signed.

Beyond and behind all this there was a tense political situation. Vella's term of office was about to expire and election day was not far off. Streva and his crowd feared Vella, but they knew that they could not hope to beat the chief for re-election if they opposed him with one of their own crowd.

The "Black Handers" looked the field over and hit upon Francesco Ortonello, who was a man of upright life and character respected by his townsmen for miles around. Ortonello's father had been mayor of Corleone. An uncle was the best-known priest in the southern extremity of Sicily. Ortonello, though, had never meddled with politics, nor with the Mafia or any



other organization. He was quite content to mind his own business and devote himself to his family. One day a committee of influential men called on Ortonello, and after persistent argument induced him to run for the office of Commander of the Sylvan Guards against Vella.

This induced Vella to suspect Ortonello for being in league with the Mafia and intent on spoiling all the good work done toward wiping out the plundering band of which Morello was a member.

Accordingly, with some liquor in him, Vella went to Ortonello's house and hurled the following at Ortonello, who did not understand the political conditions that prevailed at the time:

"So, Ortonello," said Vella in a rage, "you have dropped the mask. I never thought you were one of the Mafia's puppets. I thought you were an honest man, but evidently I fooled myself."

This onslaught in his own house brought Ortonello to his feet. He grabbed a gun and forced Vella to flee. Now, Ortonello's eyes were opened. He realized that he had been duped into accepting the candidacy against Vella. He realized that his clean record of citizenship was



to be used in order to beat Vella. He promptly went to the authorities and notified them to cancel his name.

The Mafia was thrown into panic. The bandits knew that Vella would win if Ortonello did not oppose him.

The very night following Ortonello's cancelling of his name for the office, Vella was murdered.

Previously on the evening that he was shot Vella had been making merry at the café "Stella d'Italia" with a number of public officials and was well "under the weather," as they say, when he started for home. He was seen to rest against a lamp-post. A neighbor offered him assistance to his door but Vella refused.

As soon as the shooting took place there was a commotion. Vella's wife, feeling that some such fate would befall her husband, rushed out terror-stricken and fell prostrate across the dying chief. The carabinieri arrived and with them a crowd of people. Vella was taken in a dying condition to his house, which became jammed with excited neighbors. Among those present was Morello. He had hidden his gun in a pile of rubbish at the river's edge and hur-

ried into Vella's house to look for developments. The hiding of the gun by Morello was testified to at the trial of Ortonello by a man named Antonio Caronia, who, by the way, was not murdered. He was a good shot himself, and had the reputation of being able to mix it up with any of the Morello crowd without much fear of the results.

The commander of the carabinieri was a dear friend of Vella's and had been dining with the chief but a few minutes before the shooting. The commander asked Vella who shot him and the chief muttered:

“Cows, cows,—the Mafia.” The chief also recited a long list of names of the men he had been camping after in his efforts to rid the community of the Mafia band. At this the commander of the carabinieri interrupted the dying chief, and told him he was naming too many men, and that so many could not have done the shooting. The result, the commander told the chief, would be that no one would suffer for the offense. The commander then asked Vella whether he had any quarrels recently and the chief answered:

“Yes, I quarrelled with Ortonello yesterday. He wanted to take my job away—take the bread

and butter from my wife and children—and he threatened me with a gun.”

The commander of the carabinieri immediately directed his men to go and get Ortonello and bring him to the house of the dying chief.

When Morello heard this order he smiled and departed for his home. It was upon returning there that the conversation took place which Zangara declared he had overheard between the “Black Hander” and his mother.

When the carabinieri arrived with Ortonello in their custody, Vella was in his last breaths. When asked by the commander of the carabinieri if Ortonello was the man with whom he had quarrelled on the previous day, Vella nodded his head and fell back dead.

Another arrest followed that of Ortonello. It was that of Francesco Orlando, who was also a candidate against Vella. Orlando was tried and sentenced to a term of fifteen years, which he served and is now out. Needless to say that Orlando’s sympathies and activities are not directed toward any movement favorable to the Morello crowd.

The trial of Ortonello shows the methods of the Mafia—methods that the Lupo-Morello gang

would transplant to this country in the conduct of the trials of our courts of their criminal brethren if it could be done by them. Morello's powerful friends brought it about so that the two attorneys for Ortonello deserted him at the moment the case was to go to trial so that the unfortunate Ortonello was forced to take a young lawyer who knew little of the details of the case and who was not sufficiently versed in the practice of courts.

But worse still, the two attorneys that deserted Ortonello on the eve of his trial had all along advised him that his innocence was so evident that no jury would ever convict him. It was not, therefore, the attorneys told Ortonello, necessary to go to any great pains to prove his innocence. The value of this advice to the Mafia crowd may be brought out more strongly when I tell you that both of these attorneys were betraying Ortonello and keeping Morello's friend Strevà, the powerful young leader of the Mafia, informed of every move of Ortonello. They advised Ortonello not to bring out any evidence that would be injurious to Strevà or Morello. It would not be necessary to do this to prove his innocence, the two attorneys told Ortonello.

In vain Antonio Caronia testified in Ortonello's behalf that he had seen Morello hide the gun in the pile of rubbish at the river's edge shortly after the shooting took place. To offset this testimony of Caronia's, the Morello crowd worked upon the police and had the gun spirited away. Later on, it may be added here, the police official who was responsible for the hiding of this gun at the time of Ortonello's trial, was dismissed from the service for his conduct.

In vain did Ortonello's attorney bring out evidence that the bullet extracted from Vella's body was much larger than the calibre of the gun found in Ortonello's home. Testimony was admitted at the trial to offset this. A Mafia henchman was produced who declared that the bullet had been made larger because of hitting a bone in Vella's body and thus flattening the missile.

In vain was it shown that a grocery wagon had been placed in front of Ortonello's door more than an hour before the shooting and that this wagon had to be removed before the carabinieri could get admittance to Ortonello's house when they went after him to bring him to the house of the dying chief. In vain was it brought out at the trial that Ortonello was in bed when the



carabineers entered his room to take him into custody. In vain was it shown that he could not have got into the house or out of it while a grocery wagon was backed up to his door an hour previous to the time of the shooting and was still there when the carabineers arrived to arrest him. In vain was it shown that this grocery wagon had been drawn up in front of Ortonello's door by the groceryman next door who had come from Palermo that night with a large amount of groceries, and when the mail stage was to pass, and because the street was narrow, the groceryman backed the wagon up to the door and left it there until he could unload his goods.

In vain did the groceryman testify that he was unloading his wagon when the shot was fired, that he did not leave his wagon from then until the carabineers arrived, and that Ortonello had not entered the house nor come from it during that period. In vain was testimony given that the grocery wagon, being backed up to the door, prevented Ortonello from either coming out of the house or entering it.

In order to contradict the testimony of the grocer and three others who corroborated him concerning the wagon, friends of Vella went to



a prostitute who lived in the rear of Ortonello's house and paid her money to testify that she had seen Ortonello after the shooting climb a rope and enter the rear window of this house. The window was forty feet from the ground. This woman is now dead, but before her demise she told the truth and declared that she had perjured herself for the money given her by the commander of the carabinieri. This man was very bitter against Ortonello because he believed at the time that Ortonello had murdered his friend Vella.

To no avail was the testimony of an expert shoe-maker who showed the court that the footprints examined in the spot where Morello was seen hiding by the Di Puma woman, just prior to the shooting, were not the footprints of Ortonello nor of Orlando.

As further proof of the unfair trial suffered by Ortonello let me relate that the commander of the carabinieri was so convinced of Ortonello's guilt, and so determined to prove a strong case against the unfortunate Ortonello that the commander went to the house of Biaggia Milone and frightened her by threats into testifying that she had seen Ortonello and Orlando do the shooting,

that she had seen this from the window of her home, and that she had seen the two surveying the ground on the previous Sunday. This is the Milone woman whose cousin operated the grocery store in East Ninety-seventh Street, which was the headquarters distributing plant for the Lupo-Morello counterfeit money.

For four years Ortonello remained in prison at Palermo, where the case should properly have been tried; but the Mafia crowd became frightened at the public sentiment that was being aroused in behalf of Ortonello and feared that if he were tried at Palermo, where he was so well known, and where the truth was slowly leaking out, he would be set free. Through the influence of Streva the case was transferred to Messina, at the other extremity of Sicily, where Ortonello was tried and convicted. He was sentenced to serve life imprisonment. Five of the jurors believed him innocent.

Perhaps the reader is curious to know what became of Paolino Streva, the young and powerful leader of the Mafia of that time, the protector and patron of Morello. His fate will probably serve as a warning and please the reader. He is missing from the vicinity of Corleone for some

time past. He quarrelled with Bernardo Verro, the very popular leader of the Socialist party in Corleone, and caused Verro to be shot. The shooting was inaccurate, though, and Verro recovered. Then the friends of Verro thought they would do a little shooting of their own, and they attempted to hit Strevia on three different occasions, but were unsuccessful. Then Verro's friends went after Strevia still more effectively. They burned down his house and barns and destroyed his farm lands. Strevia suddenly disappeared and his whereabouts are not known.

As for Morello, he is safely lodged in the Atlanta Federal Prison on a sentence of twenty-five years for counterfeiting. He is, however, no longer in danger of being prosecuted for the murder of Vella because the Italian Code provides that a man cannot be tried for a crime when twenty years have expired after the committing of the felony.

As for Ortonello and his family I can state that his wife and children are now in New York and prospering. The old man himself, I am happy to state, is free through friendly influences I have succeeded in bringing to bear on his case. He has taken a new grip on life since the day of

his release, even though he is broken in body and weighted with years, showing plainly the terrible suffering of his twenty-three years of unmerited prison life. His spirit is revived and his mind is clear. He prays for me and mine.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE WATCHWORD OF THE BLACK-HANDERS"

*"Have no fear—I am not asleep—and I have not slept ever since that time!"*

THESE ominous words were underscored in a letter written by Morello, the arch-bandit, to a friend in Palermo who had warned the chief to be on his guard against betrayal in his extensive criminal operations. The words "that time" undoubtedly refer back to the Corleone murders that made the chief change his habitat from the mountain haunts of the Mafia to the by-ways of New York.

I have quoted Morello because in that ominous sentence he has spoken the watchword of the "Black-Handers" in New York City. The criminal element among the Italians here is not sleeping. At the time he penned these words Morello had advanced to the leadership of the

worst and most elusive band of criminals that ever slipped past the scrutiny of the Ellis Island officials.

In contrast to the criminal element, the honest Italians of New York City, and other large centers of population in this country, are certainly sleeping. It is a restless, fearful sleep in which they are indulging. A sleep from which they will be aroused sometimes by a bomb at their door, or by the stealing of the smallest child in their household, or by a knife-thrust in the dark. The Italian, the honest Italian, the good citizen, knows that what I say is true.

But why does the honest Italian go back and sleep again when he knows that the same danger is imminent still?

The honest Italian is drugged with fear.

He fears to open his mouth and tell the police and the government officials about the threats that have been sent to him by letter or by those whom he knows are among the criminal element. His mouth is closed with the drug of fear. He goes back to sleep in silence not realizing that by so doing he invites another crime upon his household.

The antidote for the drug of fear is courage.



Perhaps courage is not the correct word; I mean rather disregard of threats. If the honest Italians in this country would disregard the threats of the very small number of criminals among them, the "Black Hand" nuisance would be wiped out before the sun returned to the meridian many times. If the honest Italian would help the police authorities by telling the facts when threatened there would be a swift ending of the "Black Hand" gang.

The reason for the fear in the mind of the honest, and even the most intelligent, Italians is born of the thought that such leaders as Morello and Lupo, were more than human in their craftiness, and had dark and mysterious ways of avoiding the best detectives in this country, and that they could even commit murder and laugh in the teeth of the police. The answer to such a thought is the sentences imposed on Morello, Lupo and the other members of the gang now confined in the federal prison. If there are other leaders of less magnitude than these two, and who have caused any Italian fear through threat or otherwise, I invite such honest Italian to tell me what he knows. There are cells unoccupied in many prisons.

In conclusion I ask the honest Italian to disregard the idea that the criminals of his race are infallible and may not be reached by the law. It is to honest Italians particularly that I send out this book. I repeat the words of Giuseppe Morello:

“HAVE NO FEAR, I AM NOT ASLEEP, AND HAVE NOT SLEPT EVER SINCE THAT TIME.”

THE END











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